

# **Preparing for War, Stumbling to Peace**

Planning for Post-conflict Operations in Iraq

**A Monograph  
by  
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## Abstract

PREPARING FOR WAR, STUMBLING TO PEACE: PLANNING FOR POST-CONFLICT OPERATIONS IN IRAQ. By Major James R. Howard, QRH, British Army, 60 pages.

This monograph discusses planning for the post-conflict phase of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. More specifically, it examines whether a disparate focus on war-fighting operations during the planning and execution phase of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM is to blame for the lack of progress towards reconstruction. It examines the factors and influences that led political and military leaders to make certain decisions during the preparatory and combat phases of operations to depose Saddam Hussein. Moreover, it asks whether military leaders could have acted differently in pursuit of the Bush Administration's strategic objectives for Iraq.

The purpose of this paper is to assess whether planning for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM devoted sufficient attention to the likely requirements of the post-conflict environment. It will analyze whether the failure to plan for this environment exposed realization of the strategic objectives to unnecessary risk. The hypothesis is that the challenges post-conflict Iraq poses to the coalition result, in part, from the failure to anticipate, collaborate and prepare. Could the likely challenges of post-Saddam Iraq have been anticipated? Did government departments and experts collaborate internally and externally to mitigate these challenges? Finally, did political and military leaders prepare thoroughly to meet the ordeals of the post-conflict environment? These three aspects are the criteria against which the performance of the United States Army during the planning and execution of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM are measured. They are drawn from Eliot A. Cohen and John Gooch's book *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War*. The measure of the United States' Army's performance against the criteria involves an assessment of the effects of senior leaders' mental models, and the effects of 'groupthink.' Analysis also examines the degree to which American military culture is appropriate for the likely missions and tasks, such as nation building, that may be the trademarks of the Global War on Terrorism.

The monograph concludes that the challenges of post-war Iraq were foreseeable if the political and military leadership had collaborated inside and outside of government. Moreover, the failure to properly anticipate and collaborate affected negatively the way in which units prepared for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. The study suggests that a combination of flawed mental models, groupthink amongst the senior political and military leadership, and military culture are, in part, to blame. Planners cannot affect many of the factors that shape the environment in which they work. Acceptance of these real-world challenges, together with a desire to learn the true lessons of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, and an understanding of operations that are truly decisive is therefore of fundamental importance. Only then can planners apply operational art effectively, and focus on designing campaigns that genuinely seek to achieve the strategic objectives laid down by the political leadership.

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## Chapter 1

On 20 March 2003, the United States and its coalition allies executed Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. The purpose of the operation was to remove the threat to world security posed by Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime, and help the Iraqi people create a democratic, representative government that coexists peacefully with her neighbors.<sup>1</sup> Coalition forces swiftly defeated Saddam Hussein's military, and President Bush declared an end to major combat operations on 02 May 2003.<sup>2</sup> Since then, United States forces in Iraq have been waging a counterinsurgency campaign that claims, on average, the lives of ten American service personnel and injures over sixty every week.<sup>3</sup> Operation IRAQI FREEDOM is not going smoothly.<sup>4</sup>

It is undeniable that the transition from Saddam, through war, to peace is fraught with difficulty. Military planners can benefit from an analysis of the events leading up to the invasion of Iraq and what has happened since. The purpose of this monograph is to identify whether the challenges that troops currently face, such as the insurgency, are attributable to errors made by commanders and planners during the preparatory stages of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.

The primary research question is, Could the Operation IRAQI FREEDOM planners have anticipated the challenges of post war Iraq? The question's simple phraseology belies a significant degree of complexity involved in reaching an answer. Thus, there are a number of supplementary questions to address before arriving at a satisfactory answer to the primary

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from "Statement of the Atlantic Summit: A Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi People," the White House. Internet, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/03/iraq/20030316-1.html> last accessed 28 July 2003.

<sup>2</sup> President Bush made the announcement from the flight deck of the USS Abraham Lincoln. See <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/05/iraq/20030501-15.html>, last accessed 24 October 2003.

<sup>3</sup> As at 18 January 2004. The most current figures are at [http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/iraq\\_casualties.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/iraq_casualties.htm) last accessed 18 January 2003.

<sup>4</sup> A balanced assessment of the challenges faced by the occupation forces in Iraq is by Kenneth Pollack "After Saddam: Assessing the Reconstruction of Iraq," available online at <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20040109faupdate83175/kenneth-m-pollack/after-saddam-assessing-the-reconstruction-of-iraq.html>, last accessed 02 February 2004.

research question. Chapter 3 will address the supplementary questions, providing a framework to answer the primary research question, which Chapter 4 will, in turn address.

There are two secondary questions. Was there sufficient information available before the war to allow leaders and planners to foresee the challenges that may follow the combat phase? It is, after all, easy to criticize the conduct of operations with hindsight, yet this serves no purpose. It is therefore necessary to ascertain whether the problems were foreseeable. The second question asks whether key civilian and military leaders exhibited a disproportionate focus on combat operations to the detriment of stability and support operations. Again, an overbearing focus on warfighting would serve to blind key leaders to the requirements of the post-conflict environment.

The tertiary questions address issues of a more specific nature and they form the foundation for the secondary questions as the monograph moves to answer the primary question. First, how did United States' Army culture and the mental models held by the civilian leadership shape planning for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM? Second, what assumptions underpinned strategic and operational planning and were they flawed or ever verified? The next question addresses the extent to which principle leaders and planners successfully collaborated during preparation for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM and, more critically, for the post-Saddam era. Finally, did military planners deviate from doctrinal guidance on how best to conduct campaign planning in the joint, interagency environment?

Four quaternary questions provide the bedrock upon which to build answers to the preceding supplementary questions. The first seeks to define the three levels of command analyzed throughout. Second, what did the Bush administration seek to achieve by launching Operation IRAQI FREEDOM? The purpose being to identify and assess the strategic objective's planners sought to achieve through the application of operational art. Third, did the army prepare in accordance with its doctrine for the likely missions and tasks of post-war Iraq? Finally, to what extent was the army able to accomplish the tasks required of it after the fall of Saddam?



## **Problem Background and Significance.**

According to Samuel J. Tangredi, the nature of conflict has changed since 11 September 2001.<sup>5</sup> The likelihood of high intensity conflict between large, similarly equipped armies has declined, while the number of smaller scale ‘interventionist’ operations has increased.<sup>6</sup> The latter tend towards the lower/medium end of conflict intensity, and are recognizable for their complexity and frequent inclusion of military operations other than war. Operation IRAQI FREEDOM combined high intensity conflict with nation building and humanitarian missions. There is little reason to doubt that the war on terrorism will require execution of similar missions in the future.

The purpose of this paper is to assess whether planning for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM devoted sufficient attention to the likely requirements of the post-conflict environment. It will analyze whether the failure to plan for this environment exposed realization of the strategic objectives to unnecessary risk. The aim is to offer consideration of the challenges of real-world campaigns, and demonstrate the limitations that overriding political concerns have on military options. The hypothesis is that the challenges post-conflict Iraq poses to American forces result from the failure to anticipate, collaborate and prepare for the ordeals of the post-conflict environment.

## **Limitations and Delimitations**

Limitations are events that may interfere with the results of a study that the researcher cannot control. The limitations demonstrate recognition of those elements that may have significant impact on events, planners and commanders, but which this study cannot examine.

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<sup>5</sup> Samuel J. Tangredi, “Assessing New Missions,” in *Transforming America’s Military* ed. Hans Binnendiki (Washington DC: Center for Technology and National Security Policy, National Defense University, 2002) 3. Tangredi’s chapter offers an excellent discussion of the challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century and how the military might rise – or fail – to meet them.

The primary limitation is the impact of political imperatives upon the military hierarchy and their plans. It is clear that the United States military is subordinate to, and in support of an overarching national security strategy or policy, and that political factors had a major impact on the planning and execution of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. For example, the perceived need to depose Saddam may have had more to do with the vision of a neo-conservative administration, than the threat that Iraq posed to the safety of the west.<sup>7</sup> However, it is not the place of this study to address the justification or reasoning behind political decisions.

Delimitations are the 'who, what, when and where' of the study. They discuss what is included and excluded. First, the monograph will focus on the strategic and operational levels of war. The tactical level has few freedoms beyond those extended them by the higher levels and so is of lesser value to research. However, it is at the tactical level that the challenges of operating in the post-conflict environment become most apparent. The experiences of the tactical level therefore remain a relevant part of the study. Second, given the joint and combined nature of military operations at the strategic and operational level, this paper will refer to the 'United States military.' However, because the United States Army has the lead role in IRAQI FREEDOM, lessons are more applicable to the army than any other service, henceforth the focus is on the army.

## **Criteria**

Three criteria will assist in answering the supplementary research questions and in refining the answer to the primary research question. Taken from Eliot A. Cohen and John Gooch's book *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War*, they provide a means to

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Numerous press articles written since the accession of George W. Bush have drawn a strong link between his administration, its key figures, and the philosopher Leo Strauss. See [http://www.fpif.org/commentary/2003/0305strauss\\_body.html](http://www.fpif.org/commentary/2003/0305strauss_body.html), last accessed 10 October 2003, for a detailed discussion of this subject.

measure the performance of the levels of command.<sup>8</sup> As such, the criteria become, in effect, the critical tasks that leaders and planners must achieve in order to maximize the chance of mission success. The criteria, or critical tasks, are general in nature. They are used to evaluate the relevance of research material. In order to generate the depth of analysis necessary to test the hypothesis, research will focus on the relationship between three critical tasks and the three layers of command under examination.

The first criterion is the need to collaborate and coordinate efforts in support of a common goal. This applies not only internally, within the layers of command, but also to collaboration between the layers of command. For example, analysis will address not only whether the Defense Department collaborated internally to plan for operations to achieve the Administration's desired endstate, but also how effectively it worked with the State Department in support of the same goal.

Identification of the linkages within and between the layers of command remains a feature of the critical task analysis throughout the paper. The second criterion requires that levels of command anticipate likely scenarios resulting from the removal of Saddam and the Ba'ath Party. This task highlights the importance of contingency planning for stability and support operations. Complexity theory and the non-linear nature of human interaction dictates the impossibility of identifying all the consequences of invading Iraq. That is not to say, however, that planning for the unexpected is unnecessary. Planners must make every effort to foresee the consequences of their actions.

The third criterion is that of preparedness. The extent to which the levels of command were prepared for the tasks required of them during the war, but more importantly in the post-conflict period, is telling. In the case of IRAQI FREEDOM it is not enough simply to anticipate

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<sup>8</sup> Eliot A. Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: the Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York: Macmillan, 1990).

what might follow the war. For example, the need to rebuild civil infrastructure, provide welfare for those in need, and prepare for a hand over to a new civil government may not sound like military tasks, yet if there is no other body capable of setting these conditions, these tasks will fall to the army. Such was the case in Iraq after April 2003. This criterion provides for an assessment of the extent to which troops were prepared for the non-warfighting, non-traditional tasks required of them after the fall of Saddam's regime.

## **Chapter 2**

The purpose of the literature review is to outline the primary and secondary source material used to research the answer to the primary research question, and supporting questions. The literature review also serves to highlight noted works the subjects of conflict termination, post-conflict operations, strategic planning in the political environment, and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, which may assist in future research of this and similar subjects.

The literature aims to support the employment of the criteria. It addresses broadly the three areas of collaboration, anticipation and preparation with the purpose of providing supporting arguments and evidence to answer the primary question. The literature review also addresses specific key supplementary questions. The first area for examination focuses upon the extent to which government departments and agencies collaborated during planning for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. It exposes the degree to which, in the eyes of the press and experts, interagency parochialism and American military culture may be incompatible with the requirements of post-conflict operations, and therefore hindered effective planning.

The second area of literature offers an overview of whether the challenges of post-war Iraq were genuinely foreseeable. Were mistakes made, particularly in relation to the force size and composition, which then threatened the success of the mission even before the Iraqi border was crossed? The final area of literature reviewed discusses how operational planning should occur according to United States joint doctrine, and the theory of operational art. It therefore provides a plausible benchmark against which to measure the actual performance of strategic and operational level leaders and planners during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.

### **Collaboration in Planning**

The systems approach to operational art requires collaboration between all elements of government and military that affects even the smallest aspect of campaign planning and execution. According to various think-tank and press reports, cooperation between United States

government departments, agencies and the military was insufficient at best, and obstructive at worst.<sup>9</sup>

The Center for Strategic and International Studies produced a number of studies highly critical of the secrecy surrounding post-conflict planning, noting that one of the Defense Department's working assumptions was that it possessed the best situational awareness and information available, and therefore had no need of outside expertise.<sup>10</sup> The Study notes also that while the Bush Administration expected other countries to help shoulder the burden of reconstruction, it failed to consult possible donors, and largely ignored the United Nations.<sup>11</sup>

Notwithstanding the Defense Department's national security concerns that led it to plan without external assistance, the Department's refusal to cooperate within government is demonstrated by the rift with the State Department. Initiated in April 2002, the State Department's 'Future of Iraq Project' was a detailed study of post-war Iraq.<sup>12</sup> When President Bush granted authority for reconstruction to the Pentagon, the Defense Department all but ignored the Project.<sup>13</sup> Nasreen Barwari, Iraqi Minister of Public Works, noted that the working

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<sup>9</sup> The statement is based on a significant body of press reports citing incidents where cooperation between government departments has been poor. Additional evidence is provided by Lieutenant General (retired) Garner and his senior staff, who were highly critical of the Office of Secretary of Defense and the way in which planning for post-combat operations was handled. See Anthony H. Cordesman, *Iraq: Too Uncertain to Call* 14 November 2003 [database on line] (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2003, accessed 12 March 2004) available at [www.csis.org/features/031114toouncertain.pdf](http://www.csis.org/features/031114toouncertain.pdf), and George Packer "War After the War: What Washington doesn't see in Iraq," *The New Yorker*, 24 November 2003 [journal on-line]; available from [http://www.newyorker.com/printable/?fact/031124fa\\_fact1](http://www.newyorker.com/printable/?fact/031124fa_fact1); Internet; accessed 16 March 2004.

<sup>10</sup> Bathsheba N. Crocker, *Post War Iraq: Are we Ready?* 25 March 2003 [database on-line] (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 25 March 2003, accessed 16 March 2004) available at <http://www.csis.org/isp/scorecard.pdf>. For four decades, the Center for Strategic and International Studies has provided world leaders with strategic insights on current and emerging global issues. It is a private, nonpartisan organization led by John J. Hamre, formerly deputy secretary of defense.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 6.

<sup>12</sup> Eric Schmitt and Joel Brinkley, "State Dept. Study Foresaw Trouble Now Plaguing Iraq," *New York Times*, 19 October 2003, 1. The 'Future of Iraq Project' assembled more than 200 exiled Iraqi engineers, lawyers, business people and other experts into 17 working groups to produce advisory papers on subjects ranged from the drafting of a new Iraqi constitution to the rebuilding of the economy.

<sup>13</sup> Peter Slevin and Dana Priest, "Wolfowitz Concedes Iraq Errors" *Washington Post*, 24 July 2003, A01.

groups contained a wealth of information that administrators ignored to the detriment of the Iraqi people.<sup>14</sup> Defense Department sources disagreed, stating that the Projects' work was of little substance.<sup>15</sup> However, it seems that the Defense Department did indeed ignore the State Department, and that the reasons for so doing were largely political.<sup>16</sup> Similar considerations within the Defense Department's senior leadership meant that the Joint Chiefs of Staff were also excluded from the small 'circle of civilian Pentagon officials' responsible for planning the occupation.<sup>17</sup>

### **Anticipating Events in the Post-Conflict Environment**

The primary research question asks whether planners could have anticipated the challenges of post-conflict Iraq. One of the most pressing issues is the on-going insurgency and whether it was avoidable. The lawlessness and insurgency in Iraq demonstrates a link between security and successful conflict termination identified by experts on many previous occasions.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the post-conflict phase shows that once a security vacuum develops, it is difficult to fill. Again, the Defense Department's record attracts more criticism than praise. The issue of

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<sup>14</sup> Eric Schmitt and Joel Brinkley, "State Dept. Study Foresaw Trouble Now Plaguing Iraq," *New York Times*, 19 October 2003, 1.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Mark Fineman, Robin Wright and Doyle McManus, "Preparing for War, Stumbling to Peace," *Los Angeles Times*, 18 July 2003. Also David Rieff, "Blueprint for a Mess," *New York Times*, 2 November 2003.

<sup>17</sup> Eric Schmitt and Joel Brinkley, "State Dept. Study Foresaw Trouble Now Plaguing Iraq," *New York Times*, 19 October 2003, 1. The situation has now changed and according to this article, The Future of Iraq Project is now used as a blueprint for reconstruction by the Coalition Provisional Authority.

<sup>18</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, *Iraq and Conflict Termination: the Road to Guerilla War?* 28 July 2003 [database on-line] (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 28 July 2003, accessed 16 March 2004) available at [http://www.csis.org/features/Iraq\\_ConflictTerm.pdf](http://www.csis.org/features/Iraq_ConflictTerm.pdf). Also see James T. Quinlivan, "Force Requirements in Stability Operations," *Parameters*, Winter 1995 [journal on-line]; available from <http://carlisle-www.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/1995/quinliv.htm>; Internet; accessed 16 March 2004.

troop numbers is central to the debate, and senior figures within the military, and expert bodies, have linked insufficient troop levels to the insurgency's rise.<sup>19</sup>

In February 2003 General Eric Shinseki informed the Senate Armed Services Committee that, "something on the order of several hundred thousand soldiers are . . . a figure that would be required" for the stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq.<sup>20</sup> Ignoring the Army's analysis of troop numbers, Deputy Defense Secretary Wolfowitz's stated that General Shinseki's estimates were "wildly off the mark."<sup>21</sup> He went on to say that, "it's hard to conceive that it would take more forces to provide stability in a post-Saddam Iraq than it would to conduct the war itself and to secure the surrender of Saddam's security forces and his army – hard to imagine."<sup>22</sup>

A 1995 *Parameters* paper argues that a failure to resource stability operations with the necessary troop levels may have grave consequences.<sup>23</sup> There are currently just under six members of the security forces per thousand of population in Iraq.<sup>24</sup> Based upon the articles' conclusions, such force levels are dangerously low given the ongoing insurgency. By comparison,

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<sup>19</sup> Mark E. Rosen "Tense Times on the Potomac As Iraq, Deficits Monopolize the Political Spotlight," *Navy League*, April 2003 [journal on-line] available from [http://www.navyleague.org/sea\\_power/apr\\_03\\_21.php](http://www.navyleague.org/sea_power/apr_03_21.php); Internet; accessed 16 March 2004. See also Anthony H. Cordesman, *Iraq and Conflict Termination: the Road to Guerilla War?* 28 July 2003 [database on-line] (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 28 July 2003, accessed 16 March 2004) available at [http://www.csis.org/features/Iraq\\_ConflictTerm.pdf](http://www.csis.org/features/Iraq_ConflictTerm.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> Noam Scheiber, "When Does Paul Wolfowitz Come Clean?" *New Republic Online* 23 May 2003 [on-line journal] available at <http://tnr.com/etc.mhtml?week=2003-05-18>, accessed 16 March 2004. Testimony heard by the Senate Armed Services Committee is not available to the public. This widely leaked quotation was taken from this article.

<sup>21</sup> Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz testimony to the House of Representatives Committee on the Budget, 108<sup>th</sup> Congress. Available online at <http://www.access.gpo.gov/congress/house/house04.html> last accessed 28 October 2003.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> James T. Quinlivan, "Force Requirements in Stability Operations," *Parameters*, Winter 1995 [journal on-line]; available from <http://carlisle-www.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/1995/quinliv.htm>; Internet; accessed 16 March 2004. The author is Director of the Arroyo Center at RAND, a US army-funded center for policy research.

<sup>24</sup> These figures are reached using the population figures for of Iraq as 25 million (source: <http://www.countryreports.org/iraq.htm> last accessed 16 March 2004) and coalition and Iraqi security force levels as being 150,000 as at 15 December 2003, (source: various Department of defense sources). These figures produce a ration of 1:167, or 5.9:1000. These figures are at the low end of James T. Quinlivan's second category.



Northern Ireland, suffering from a similar insurgency after 1969, had force ratios of 20 per thousand of population.<sup>25</sup>

Dr Phebe Marr's testimony to the Senate warned that a failure to provide law and order during and after the war may result in a violent backlash against American troops.<sup>26</sup> Marr also noted that the occupation of Iraq would be an expensive, long-term commitment. A consequence of such action would lead the Arab world to view the United States as a foreign occupying force.<sup>27</sup> She also noted the requirement to maintain a capable security force both during and after the combat phase, an observation that addresses the issue of demobilizing Iraq's armed forces.

Eric Hoffer, in *The True Believer*, foresaw the dangers associated with rapidly demobilizing armies, noting that they can flood society with disgruntled misfits who make ideal insurgents.<sup>28</sup> The White House received warnings about the likelihood of significant armed opposition to American forces, and the pressing need for troops to provide security.<sup>29</sup> The decision to disband the Iraqi military, was therefore met with surprise and criticism. The argument against demobilization being simply that if Iraq's regular forces remained intact and employed, perhaps on security duties, the Coalition Provisional Authority would have avoided turning several hundred thousand trained, armed and disgruntled males loose amongst an already

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<sup>25</sup> James T. Quinlivan, 1995.

<sup>26</sup> Testimony by Dr Phebe Marr to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 01 August 2002. Available online from <http://iraqwatch.org/government/US/hearingsPreparedstatements/maff-sfrc-080102> last accessed 29 August 2003. Dr. Phebe Marr is a scholar and analyst of southwest Asia and is a leading U.S. specialist on Iraq, frequently consulted by government and non-government authorities. She retired from the U.S. government in 1997. Dr Marr is a former professor at the National Defense University.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements*, (New York: Harper Perennial, 1951). Eric Hoffer (1902-1983) was an American social philosopher. He wrote nine books and won the Presidential Medal of Freedom. His first book, *The True Believer*, published in 1951, was widely recognized as a classic. This book, which he considered his best, established his reputation, and he remained a successful writer for most of his remaining years. *The True Believer* was a core text used on the Special Forces qualification course, and is a course textbook at the School of Advanced Military Studies.

<sup>29</sup> Walter Pincus, "Spy Agencies Warned of Iraq Resistance," *Washington Post*, 9 September 2003, 1.

unstable population.<sup>30</sup> No surprise then, that in the days after publication of the demobilization order in late May 2003, there was a massive increase in attacks against American forces by former Iraqi troops.<sup>31</sup>

The need for sufficient troops to provide law and order would have been more apparent if the civilian and military leadership had anticipated how the Iraqi people might receive occupation forces. Ahmed Chalabi's infamous statement that Iraqi's would greet troops with "sweets and flowers" was inaccurate.<sup>32</sup> Despite warnings from the intelligence agencies and expert opinion to the contrary, senior leaders such as Vice President Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz and others, remained convinced that the people would welcome military forces as liberators.<sup>33</sup> Ralph Peters has suggested that the failure to foresee the reality of post-war Iraq may be due, in part, to the influence of 'groupthink' within the Defense Department and amongst military planners.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, General Anthony Zinni raises the issue of American military and particularly army culture, and how it might have impaired the way in which leaders and planners conceptualize the requirements of post-conflict operations.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> See [http://wais.stanford.edu/Iraq/iraq\\_bremerdissolvesthearmy52703.html](http://wais.stanford.edu/Iraq/iraq_bremerdissolvesthearmy52703.html), for more information.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> David Rieff, "Blueprint for a Mess," *New York Times*, 02 November 2003, 1.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ralph Peters, "Why Intelligence Failed," *New York Post*, 30 January 2004, available on-line at <http://www.nypost.com/postopinion/opedcolumnists/15751.htm> last accessed 02 February 2004. Ralph Peters is a former US Army intelligence officer turned author. 'Groupthink' explains how a group of perfectly intelligent individuals can select a course of action based on limited consideration of the available options and whereby the obvious drawbacks are marginalized to a point where the group feels justified in ignoring them completely. Groupthink is also apparent where decision makers make little or no attempt to obtain information from experts qualified to properly evaluate their plans, and where there is little or no consideration of the contingency plans in the event of setbacks. For an excellent discussion of groupthink, see Irving L. Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.), 1982.

<sup>35</sup> General (R) Anthony Zinni, in an interview with Jim Lehrer, 30 September 2003, online at [www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/military/july-dec03/zinni\\_09-30.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/military/july-dec03/zinni_09-30.html) last accessed 02 October 2003.

## Preparing for Likely Missions and Tasks

The military planner should employ the use of force to create the conditions for strategic success. Yet it is rare that the success of an individual operation achieves the strategic goal. Svechin wrote that strategy is the art of combining preparations for war and the grouping of operations for achieving the goal set by the war for the armed forces.<sup>36</sup> The planner's role is to link military means to strategic ends, realizing that the military operation is never an end in itself.

The military are often accused of having a disproportionate focus on combat operations, while losing sight of the desired strategic objective and post-conflict considerations.<sup>37</sup> Some who have addressed this subject, such as Fred Ikle, understand the military's focus on winning battles, noting that the staff is too busy to consider the campaign as a whole.<sup>38</sup> A less forgiving perspective is offered by Michael Handel. Handel concludes that the military customarily 'forget' that war is fought to achieve political ends – namely a better peace – and they have neither the desire nor the time to consider the shape of the peace and the aftermath of war.<sup>39</sup> Such comments undoubtedly rile military planners, and yet Handel's opinion is probably more reflective of reality than most would care to admit.

Joint Doctrine seeks to eliminate the problem identified by Handel by offering guidance on how the United States military should plan and conduct operations aimed at accomplishing a

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<sup>36</sup> Aleksandr A. Svechin. *Strategiia* (Moscow: Voennyi vestnik, 1926. East View Publications, Mpls, MN, 1999), p 69. General Svechin served in the Russian, and subsequently Soviet army. He was an authoritative figure on the subject of military theory during his life, and is viewed today as being one of the most formative modern military theorists to date.

<sup>37</sup> Robert M. Cassidy. "Prophets or Praetorians? The Utopian Paradox and the Powell Corollary." *Parameters* Vol XXXIII No 3, Autumn 2003. 130.

<sup>38</sup> Fred C. Ikle. *Every War Must End*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991). 19. Fred C. Ikle served as a Commissioner on the National Commission on Terrorism, which produced the Report of the National Commission on Terrorism in June 2000 for President Clinton. Prior to joining CSIS in 1988, Fred Ikle was Undersecretary of Defense for Policy in the Ronald Reagan administration.

<sup>39</sup> Handel, Michael I. *War Termination – A Critical Study*. (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Peace Papers, 1978). 24. Michael Handel was Professor of Naval Strategy at the Naval War College from 1990 to his death in 2001. He was an expert on strategic theory, nature and operations of war, and the future of warfare. He was Professor of National Security Affairs at the U.S. Army War College.

strategic or operational objective within a given space and time.<sup>40</sup> Joint Doctrine, however, displays what Colonel James W. Reed describes as a “serious blind spot” regarding the issue of conflict termination.<sup>41</sup> Joint Publication 3-0 offers an adequate discussion of war termination and seeks to eliminate ‘blind spots.’ It cautions the operational commander to frame his operation within the strategic guidance set by the political leadership. Moreover, it reminds planners to consider conflict termination at the outset of operational planning.<sup>42</sup> Unfortunately, Joint Publications 5.00, *Doctrine for Planning Joint Operations*, and 5.00.1, *Campaign Planning*, offer no additional insight.<sup>43</sup> James W. Reed’s assessment of Joint Doctrine and its guidance on conflict termination is extant. He highlights the void that exists in Joint Doctrine in relation to conflict termination that existed in the early 1990’s and which persists to this day.<sup>44</sup>

Stephen J. Cimbala reminds planners that they must always retain a focus on the strategic objectives of the war.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, Max Manwaring notes that successful outcomes to conflict are achieved by those whose military and politicians prepare for peace in qualitative and quantitative

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<sup>40</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 5-0, *Doctrine for Planning Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 1995), GL-4.

<sup>41</sup> James W. Reed, “Should Deterrence Fail: War Termination and Campaign Planning,” *Parameters*, Summer 1993 [journal on-line]; available from <http://carlisle-www.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/1993/reed.htm> Internet; accessed 16 March 2004. Colonel (Retired) James W. Reed commanded 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion of 6<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Brigade attached to Task Force Bayonet (193<sup>rd</sup> Brigade) during Operation JUST CAUSE, Panama, December 1989. He has written several articles on the subject of conflict termination.

<sup>42</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*. (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2001). I-10-11.

<sup>43</sup> Joint Publication 5.00 mentions conflict termination and transition operations less than 12 times. JP 5.00.1 devotes less than one page to the subject, yet states it is a “key aspect of the campaign planning process.”

<sup>44</sup> Joint Publication 3.0 alone advises that the underlying causes of a war (cultural, religious, territorial, etc) must influence the understanding of conditions necessary for termination of hostilities and resolution of conflict. It also states that a hasty and ill-designed end to the operation may be the catalyst for related and unforeseen disputes that may in turn renew conflict.

<sup>45</sup> Stephen J. Cimbala and Keith A. Dunn eds., *Conflict Termination and Military Strategy: Coercion, Persuasion, and War*, (Boulder: West View Press, 1987) 2. Stephen J. Cimbala is Professor of Political Science at the Pennsylvania State University, Delaware County, and author of several books, including *Strategy After Deterrence* (Praeger, 1991) and *Force and Diplomacy in the Future* (Praeger, 1992).

terms before and during operations.<sup>46</sup> Conflict termination is therefore a vital pillar in the framework of operational art. Discussion of war and operational art without discussion of conflict termination is meaningless.<sup>47</sup> Shimon Naveh links operational art to systems theory in his investigation of how the military may better plan in support of strategic ends.<sup>48</sup> Naveh suggests that military operational experience conforms, in its principles and characteristics, to the universal phenomenon of systems. His discussion of operational art, complexity and systems theory reinforces the notion that planning for conflict termination conducted in isolation of, and separate to the campaign plan will not achieve the desired results. Central Command and the Combined Forces Land Component Command received criticism for ignoring the post-conflict operations. Adopting a systems approach to operational art may mitigate against similar mistakes in the future.<sup>49</sup>

The supporting literature enables an assessment of whether the IRAQI FREEDOM planners achieved the three critical tasks of collaboration, anticipation and preparation. Moreover, the literature provides a reference point from which to develop answers to supplementary questions and to employ the criteria. The supplementary question aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of the collaborative effort is key to the final answer. The literature suggests that

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<sup>46</sup> Max G. Manwaring, "Limited War and Conflict Control," in *Conflict Termination and Military Strategy* ed Stephen J. Cimbala and Keith A. Dunn (Boulder: West View Press) 61. Dr. Max Manwaring holds the General Douglas MacArthur Chair and is Professor of Military Strategy at the U.S. Army War College. He is a retired U.S. Army colonel and an Adjunct Professor of International Politics at Dickinson College. He has served in various civilian and military positions, including the U.S. Army War College, the U.S. Southern Command, and the Defense Intelligence Agency.

<sup>47</sup> Joint Doctrine defines operational art as the "employment of military forces to attain strategic and/or operational objectives through the design, organization, integration, and conduct of strategies, campaigns, major operations, and battles." Source: Joint Publication 3.0, GL-14.

<sup>48</sup> Shimon Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence: The Evolution of Operational Theory* (London: Frank Cass, 1997). Shimon Naveh, former brigadier general in the Israeli Defense Forces, provides a useful albeit complex study on the importance of operational art in military planning.

<sup>49</sup> Accusations that the war plan received most attention from the planners has been widespread, but is well reflected in the "Lessons from Iraq" section of Parameters, Vol XXXIII, No 3. There is much evidence to suggest that criticism is justified, and is perhaps most clearly demonstrated by the fact that the Commander Third Army, LTG McKiernan, announced to his staff as early as February 2003 that he would

leaders and planners across levels of command tended not to function as a team. Moreover, their decisions and actions suggest the influence of groupthink, and cultural bias may feature in conclusions to the related supplementary questions.

The primary and secondary sources also provide different perspectives on the extent to which the likely nature of post-war Iraq the associated challenges were foreseeable. The literature enables the reader to assess the degree to which planners achieved the task of anticipation. It also provides those seeking to judge whether planners might have foreseen the post-conflict challenges with evidence that, in the view of some authors, such an accomplishment was feasible.

Finally, the literature addressing the last critical task analyzes the preparation of forces who were to execute the plan drawn up by the operational level of command. The research offers some authoritative tenets on campaign planning and operational art taken from United States joint doctrine and recognized experts in the field of operational art. These provide a base from which to evaluate the extent to which leaders and planners crafted plan designed to achieve the Bush administrations' strategic objectives.

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focus on the plan to defeat the Iraqi forces, and would allow his deputy to lead on the plan for the post-conflict phase.

## Chapter 3

The primary research question asks whether the Operation IRAQI FREEDOM planners could have anticipated the challenges of post war Iraq. Before answering this question, it is necessary to examine several supplementary questions, the answers to which will provide the framework and evidence for discussion of the primary question. The first of these questions addresses the three levels of command analyzed in this paper.<sup>50</sup> First, the strategic level of command. This is the senior leadership of the United States. It comprises President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney, and includes key figures such as Condoleezza Rice, Bush's National Security Advisor; Donald Rumsfeld, the Defense Secretary; Colin Powell, the Secretary of State, and George Tenet, the Director of Central Intelligence.<sup>51</sup>

The second layer of command comprises the military operational commanders and their staffs.<sup>52</sup> This is primarily United States Central Command, commanded by General Tommy Franks, and his subordinate Third Army Commander, Lieutenant General David McKiernan, also the Combined Forces Land Component Commander for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. Generals' Franks' and McKiernan's staffs were responsible for planning operations to remove Saddam Hussein.<sup>53</sup> This layer of command was therefore responsible for designing military operations

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<sup>50</sup> The structure for the application of criteria to this research is drawn from that used by Eliot Cohen and John Gooch, 1990.

<sup>51</sup> Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (NY: NY, Simon & Schuster) 2002. This fascinating book tells the behind-the-scenes story of how President George W. Bush sought to deal with the 9/11 Attacks and the US response against Al Queda and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. It is clear that Bush respects the opinion of his National Security Advisor. It is also evident that as proposals for the response to 9/11 are planned, the Secretary of Defense has significantly more influence than Secretary of State, Colin Powell. Rumsfeld, Cheney and other close advisors, clearly reflecting the neo-conservative views put forward in the 1998 letter to President Clinton about the need to invade Iraq, (see <http://www.newamericancentury.org/iraqlintonletter.htm>) frequently discuss removing Saddam. Powell is cautious, noting the need to maintain international support for US actions. Rumsfeld is more hawkish. For a period he holds weekly one-on-one meetings with President Bush, further isolating Powell.

<sup>52</sup> Col Richard Iron OBE noted during seminar discussion on 03 February 2004 that of the 31 general officers on the Land Component Command staff for IRAQI FREEDOM, only two were British. The focus of the monograph is therefore the United States Army.

<sup>53</sup> Secretary Rumsfeld's explanation of how the plan was developed is at [http://www.dod.gov/transcripts/2003/t04012003\\_t0401sd.html](http://www.dod.gov/transcripts/2003/t04012003_t0401sd.html) last accessed 19 January 2004.

aimed at achieving the desired strategic end state. These planning staffs were responsible for the employment of operational art; linking the tactical battles to build the campaign strategy.

Analysis may demonstrate that the operational chain of command tended to focus primarily on combat operations, rather than build a campaign focused on delivering the strategic objective.

If there was a disproportionate focus on combat operations, it would be borne out by analysis of the actions of the third tier: The tactical level, comprising the corps level and below. Analysis of the tactical level may expose shortfalls in planning and resourcing, and might bring into question the extent to which the operational and strategic levels of command anticipated and planned for contingencies in the aftermath of the Iraqi defeat. These criteria therefore comprise three tasks against which the occupying forces must succeed if they are to achieve the Bush Administration's strategic end state, and cover the gamut of actions from initial planning, through execution, to post-conflict operations.

The first critical task is that of collaboration. It applies to all areas of government. Since no individual area of government alone possesses the ways and means necessary to achieve the desired endstate in Iraq, collaboration in ways and means is vital to achieve the desired ends.<sup>54</sup> The need to anticipate the consequences of ones' actions and those of the enemy is the second critical task. The third task, preparation, requires that a thorough assessment of the enemy, includes the need to consider possible scenarios, and prepare accordingly to meet them.

The primary research question seeks to analyze whether the current risks to strategic endstate in Iraq's post-conflict environment were foreseeable. A failure matrix offers a graphical depiction of the critical path demonstrating where levels of command failed to achieve critical tasks. An explanation of how the matrix seeks to support the research is at table 1 for illustrative purposes.



Level of Command	Strategic	Operational	Tactical
Critical Task			
Anticipate	Critical: Did the strategic level use all resources to anticipate the likely outcomes of post-war Iraq?	Less critical: Did the operational level attempt to prepare the tactical level for likely missions/tasks in post-conflict Iraq?	Illustrative: Demonstrates whether the post-Saddam challenges foreseen by higher levels were accurate or relevant.
Collaborate	Critical: To what extent did the strategic level of command collaborate during planning?	Less critical: Did the operational level overcome the strategic level failure to collaborate?	Illustrative: Demonstrates the effectiveness of higher levels of command at meeting critical tasks
Prepare	Less critical/formative: How did the actions of the strategic level shape the preparations for post-conflict operations at the operational/tactical level?	Formative: Was the operational level prepared for the nature of operations it was required to conduct after the war?	Critical: Was the tactical level prepared for the missions and tasks it was required to perform in the post-conflict environment?

*Table 1 – The failure matrix*

## Anticipating the Challenges of the Post-Conflict Environment

Cohen and Gooch define the failure to anticipate as the inability to foresee and act appropriately to deal with an enemy's action, or a likely response to a move of one's own. This definition helps focus the answers to supplementary questions.<sup>55</sup> First, what were the strategic objectives for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM?

Basil Liddell-Hart reminds us that the object of war is a better state of peace, hence "it is essential to conduct war with constant regard to the peace you devise."<sup>56</sup> The military act in order to create the conditions whereby the civilian authority is able to reach the desired endstate or set of strategic conditions. The Bush Administration lists these conditions in the 'White House

<sup>54</sup> Lack of collaboration was a critical task in 50 per cent of cases examined by Cohen and Gooch. Inability to anticipate and prepare was responsible for two of six military failures. See Cohen and Gooch, 1990.

<sup>55</sup> Cohen and Gooch, 1990, 27.

<sup>56</sup> B.N. Liddell-Hart, *Strategy*, (New York: Meridan Printing, 1991), 353. Captain (retired) Basil Liddell-Hart served in the British Army during World War I. Subsequently a journalist and prolific military author on military theory, he maintained close ties with Major General 'Boney' Fuller and T.E. Lawrence. He was largely responsible for developing the 'maneuverist approach' central to British military doctrine.

Vision for Iraq,<sup>57</sup> Free of Saddam Hussein, Bush envisaged the new Iraq to be secure, non-threatening and prosperous; a country where a democratic government representative of all Iraq's peoples would uphold human rights and the rule of law, and which would work in close partnership with America and the international institutions to help realize a better future for Iraq and her people.<sup>58</sup> Having provided the strategic objective, did the levels of command analyze likely post-conflict scenarios that may hinder achievement of this laudable aim? Examination will focus on four formative elements: the Departments of Defense and State; the intelligence agencies; and finally the body of expert opinion.<sup>59</sup>

To understand how principle leaders viewed post-conflict Iraq during the planning phase, it is helpful to assess their mental models.<sup>60</sup> The following exchange between George Bush and Al Gore during the 2000 Presidential race offers insight into how President Bush views post-conflict activities in relation to American forces. Bush and Gore disagreed about using troops for peacekeeping operations: "He believes in nation building," Bush said. "I would be very careful about using our troops as nation builders. I believe the role of the military is to fight and win

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<sup>57</sup> "Statement of the Atlantic Summit: A Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi People," the White House. Internet, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/03/iraq/20030316-1.html>; Internet; last accessed 28 July 2003.

<sup>58</sup> The Coalition Provisional Authority has as its mandated endstate for Iraq: "A durable peace for a united and stable, democratic Iraq that provides effective and representative government for and by the Iraqi people; is underpinned by new and protected freedoms and a growing market economy; and no longer poses a threat to its neighbors or international security and is able to defend itself." Source: George Packer "War After the War: What Washington doesn't see in Iraq," *The New Yorker*, 24 November 2003 [journal on-line]; available from [http://www.newyorker.com/printable/?fact/031124fa\\_fact1](http://www.newyorker.com/printable/?fact/031124fa_fact1); Internet; accessed 16 March 2004. 58.

<sup>59</sup> The body of expert opinion is defined as the opinion put forward by legitimate, respected and credible think-tanks and renowned academics and commentators.

<sup>60</sup> Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: the Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Doubleday, 1990). Senge defines mental models as "deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action." We are usually unaware of our mental models and the extent to which they effect our behavior. It is impossible to make sense of an individuals' understanding of a situation without first examining their mental model.

wars.”<sup>61</sup> Such a mental model seems paradoxical. Without using American troops for nation building after the war, Bush’s strategic objectives were unachievable unless it was assumed that war alone would deliver the desired end state. As Secretary Powell realized, the defeat of Saddam’s forces alone would not achieve the strategic objective. He therefore ensured that, through the Future of Iraq Project, his department prepared accordingly.<sup>62</sup>

Administration policy or mental models had a detrimental influence on governmental, and especially Defense Department planning due in part to the ‘no nation building’ vision Secretary Rumsfeld shared with President Bush.<sup>63</sup> Given the influence of these mental models, the Defense Department found it difficult to anticipate the likely nature of post-war Iraq. The vast majority of press interviews with IRAQI FREEDOM planners examined during the research are indicative of flawed post-war planning and “inept execution.”<sup>64</sup> The violence and insurgency present since late-May 2003 are partially a result of decisions made in Washington before the war.<sup>65</sup> The position adhered to by the Pentagon is that anticipating the events that have unfolded since the end of major combat operations was impossible, and yet the evidence suggests otherwise.<sup>66</sup> This supplementary question has already addressed the impact of the senior civilian leadership’s mental models. Turning now to the military, and notwithstanding that mental

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<sup>61</sup> Douglas Holt, “Army Institute to be Shut Down,” *Chicago Tribune*, 15 April 2003. Internet; [http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/iraq/chi-0304150249apr15\\_0,7065241.story?coll=chi-news-hed](http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/iraq/chi-0304150249apr15_0,7065241.story?coll=chi-news-hed); last accessed 16 July 2003.

<sup>62</sup> David Rieff, “Blueprint for a Mess,” *New York Times*, 02 November 2003, 1.

<sup>63</sup> Bob Woodward, 2002. *Bush at War* provides a fascinating insight into the personalities, decision making and interaction between principle leaders within the Bush administration. Secretary Rumsfeld is particularly close to President Bush. Woodward also describes the friction and competition for influence that exists between the Rumsfeld’s and Powell’s offices. Rumsfeld’s organization clearly wanted to exclude the State Department where possible from issues related to military action against Afghanistan and Iraq.

<sup>64</sup> David Rieff, “Blueprint for a Mess,” *New York Times*, 02 November 2003, 1. With the exception of statements made by staff in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, every army officer interviewed by the press in the articles cited for this paper pointed to flawed planning and poor execution of post-conflict operations.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

model's affect senior personnel just as much as their civilian counterparts, the issue of American army culture warrants attention.<sup>67</sup>

James Dewar wrote that American army culture is increasingly inappropriate for the missions and tasks it is required to perform.<sup>68</sup> He reflects the concern, palpable since the early 1990's, that interventionist missions are increasingly necessary as terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction threaten the American homeland.<sup>69</sup> The army has traditionally viewed interventionist tasks, or missions for operations other than war, with disdain. As a result of the Vietnam experience, counterinsurgency was seen first as an aberration, and then as a mistake to be avoided.<sup>70</sup> Influenced largely by the work of Colonel (retired) Harry Summers, the Army chose to focus on mid to high intensity conventional wars, all but ignoring the complex military-political tasks necessary to defeat low-level insurgencies.<sup>71</sup>

The Weinberger-Powell doctrine, pre-eminent in the last decades of the twentieth century, continued to shape a preference for war that envisaged the fast, overwhelming and decisive application of maximum force in the minimum time.<sup>72</sup> The years following the withdrawal from South East Asia reflected a general desire to ignore the Vietnam War and its lessons, and refocused on the requirements to defeat the Warsaw Pact in a more conventional

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<sup>67</sup> Edward Dorn and Howard D Graves, *American Military Culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, February 2000 (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies) [database on-line] available at <http://www.csis.org/pubs/am21exec.html>; last accessed 16 March 2004; last accessed 16 March 2004. Culture is the accepted understanding of what is right and true about any organization. It is the "amalgam of values, customs, traditions, and their philosophical underpinnings that, over time, has created a shared professional ethos."

<sup>68</sup> James Dewar, et al, *Army Culture and Planning in a Time of Great Change*, RAND (Santa Monica: California, 1996) 28.

<sup>69</sup> Sam J. Tangredi, 2002. 7.

<sup>70</sup> Conrad C. Crane, *Avoiding Vietnam: the US Army's response to Defeat in South East Asia*, (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute) September 2002, [database on-line] available at <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/pubs/2002/avoiding/avoiding.pdf> last accessed 16 March 2004.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid. It should be noted that in the post-Vietnam era, US Special Forces continued to study the methods of counter-insurgency, albeit largely from the perspective of the insurgent.

<sup>72</sup> Robert M. Cassidy, "Prophets or Praetorians? The Utopian Paradox and the Powell Corollary," *Parameters*, Vol XXXIII, No 3, Autumn 2003. 137.

war.<sup>73</sup> The military refocused on the Soviet threat, and the conventional tactics required win a war against the Warsaw Pact. Summers' *On Strategy* reinforced the view that American lost in Vietnam because it dabbled with counterinsurgency and failed to wage conventional war.<sup>74</sup> It became widely accepted, therefore, that the United States military 'does not do Vietnam's'.<sup>75</sup> The Gulf War signified the apogee of this doctrine; as General Colin Powell wrote, "go in big and end it quickly."<sup>76</sup>

The new doctrine of Rapid, Decisive Operations signifies a change in employment of American military power in the twenty-first century. Such operations promise decisive effects with light forces and few casualties, where the aim is to paralyze, shock and unhinge the enemy using information superiority, tempo and decisive force.<sup>77</sup> Yet this new doctrine, like its predecessor, reflects the reluctance to become involved in 'small wars' or low-intensity conflict. Both President Bush and Donald Rumsfeld have remarked that the United States 'does not do nation building'.<sup>78</sup> Moreover, there is no encouragement for the armed forces to prepare for such tasks given the President's visceral aversion to direct participation in nation building, an aversion

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<sup>73</sup> A 1977 survey of *Military Review* testified to the Army's aversion to models other than the big war paradigm. It found that in the 1976, the entire years' volumes included almost no critical appraisal of low-intensity conflict. Similarly, a 1989 survey determined that of the 1400 articles published by the same periodical between 1975 and 1989, only 43 discussed low-intensity conflict.

<sup>74</sup> Harry G. Summers, *On Strategy: the Vietnam War in Context* (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, 1981).

<sup>75</sup> The phrase is taken from John Hillen's article "Superpowers Don't do Windows" first published in *Orbis*, Spring 1997; available at <http://www.fpri.org/americanvulnerable/03.SuperpowersDontDoWindows.Hillen.pdf>, last accessed 16 March 2004. Hillen's article states that the US should remain focused on those issues that threaten directly the US national security and interest. It should not become embroiled in humanitarian or peace keeping/ peace support operations. Instead, these operations should be the remit of 'lesser powers' who are less well equipped to deal with high intensity conflict, and who more disposed to the less arduous duties of peace support operations.

<sup>76</sup> Colin Powell, *My American Journey* (New York: Random House, 1995) 487.

<sup>77</sup> Christopher Ankerson and Losel Tethong, "Rapid Decisive Operations are Risky Business," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* October 2003 [on-line journal]; Internet; [http://www.usni.org/Proceedings/Articles03/PR\\_Oankersen10.htm](http://www.usni.org/Proceedings/Articles03/PR_Oankersen10.htm), last accessed 3 November 2003. RDO employs cutting-edge technology to support limited numbers of forces in operations where rapid insertion, overwhelming firepower and swift redeployment are trademarks.

<sup>78</sup> Donald H. Rumsfeld, "Beyond Nation Building," *Washington Post*, 25 September 2003. 33.

whose price is evident in the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan.<sup>79</sup> Such are the formative influences on American army culture. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the American military establishment has traditionally viewed nation building, peace support, and humanitarian support operations with disdain. The mental models of the senior civilian leadership, combined with the influence of groupthink amongst the same group, fostered a resurgence of the more negative aspects of army culture. As a result of their formative influences, the default setting for the military leadership exhibits a focus on combat operations, and views interventionist and nation building operations with disdain.<sup>80</sup>

Planning for an invasion of Iraq began shortly after the 9/11 attacks.<sup>81</sup> To understand the direction this took, it is essential to understand the assumptions that formed the basis for strategic and operational planning. After the United States deposed the Taliban, Douglas Feith, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, established the Office of Special Plans, tasked with strategic direction for the invasion of Iraq.<sup>82</sup> At this point the Department of Defense established a set of assumptions about the nature of a post Saddam Iraq. These assumptions did not account for the myriad difficulties that would arise at the end of major combat operations. Their validity was

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<sup>79</sup> Jeffrey Record, "The Bush Doctrine and War with Iraq," *Parameters*, Volume XXXIII, No 1, March 2003, 4-21. Jeffrey Record is a former professional staff member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and senior fellow at the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis.

<sup>80</sup> David T. Kerrick, "Conflict Termination: It's Not Just for Politicians Anymore," (Master's Dissertation; Naval war College, Newport R.I); available at [http://stinet.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/fulcrum\\_main.pl?database=ft\\_u2&searchid=0&keyfieldvalue=ADA328160&filename=%2Ffulcrum%2Fdata%2FTR\\_fulltext%2Fdoc%2FADA328160.pdf](http://stinet.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/fulcrum_main.pl?database=ft_u2&searchid=0&keyfieldvalue=ADA328160&filename=%2Ffulcrum%2Fdata%2FTR_fulltext%2Fdoc%2FADA328160.pdf); accessed 10 December 2003. The establishment identifies traditionally with a culture of high-intensity warfighting, and pays scant attention to the seemingly lesser needs of the post-conflict environment.

<sup>81</sup> LTC Charles Eassa, V Corps Deputy Chief of Plans, interview by author, Leavenworth, KS, 25 November 2003. LTC Eassa and V Corps headquarters were moving to Poland to take part in an exercise when the 9/11 attacks occurred. His planning team was told to occupy a secure location. The V Corps planning team was tasked soon after to begin planning for the invasion of Iraq with the purpose of removing Saddam. Secretary Rumsfeld has since confirmed that planning for the war began long in advance of the decision to go to war being taken. (For further information, see Woodward, Robert *Bush at War*, and "Blueprint for a Mess" *New York Times*, 3 November 2003.

<sup>82</sup> David Rieff, "Blueprint for a Mess" *New York Times*, 3 November 2003.

therefore questionable, and yet they endured.<sup>83</sup> The host of 'Meet the Press' in February 2003 challenged Vice President Cheney with the findings of various intelligence reports, stating that American troops invading Iraq would continue to meet violent resistance after the war. Cheney dismissed those conclusions and reaffirmed his belief that troops would be greeted as liberators.<sup>84</sup> The assumption that resistance would be negligible did much to shape further planning: Because resistance would be minimal, post-conflict planning need not consider the possibility of a counterinsurgency.

In reality, many doubted that American troops would be greeted as liberators. Yet, what evidence is there to suggest that post-conflict Iraq would present a significant challenge to American forces? The Center for Strategic and International Studies noted as early January 2003, that security issues in a post-Saddam Iraq would be of paramount concern.<sup>85</sup> The RAND Corporation wrote that the allied invasion would bring about a new wave of foreign terrorist attacks in Iraq.<sup>86</sup> The Washington Institute for Near East Policy was even more specific. It predicted that Ba'ath cells, Al Qaeda terrorists, Islamic radicals and even common criminals would continue to target troops after the war.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Of the assumptions identified by the Defense Department, four are of interest: allied troops would be greeted as liberators; Iraq's infrastructure would remain intact; Iraq's oil production would meet much of the reconstruction costs; and finally that the opinions of the Iraqi National Congress reflected those of the Iraqi people. Due to space limitations, this paper will not address these assumptions in detail. However, the use of flawed assumptions in the planning process is believed to be a significant cause of the failure to anticipate and prepare for the challenges of post-conflict reconstruction in Iraq. Source: Anthony H. Cordesman, *Iraq and Conflict Termination: the Road to Guerilla War?* 28 July 2003 [database on-line] (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 28 July 2003, accessed 16 March 2004) available at [http://www.csis.org/features/Iraq\\_ConflictTerm.pdf](http://www.csis.org/features/Iraq_ConflictTerm.pdf).

<sup>84</sup> E.J. Dionne, "Behind the Failure," *Washington Post*, 22 August 2003, 21.

<sup>85</sup> Frederick D. Barton and Bathsheba N. Crocker, *A Wiser Peace: An Action Strategy for a Post-Conflict Iraq*, 23 January 2003, [database on-line] (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 23 January 2003, accessed 16 March 2004) available at <http://www.csis.org/isp/wiserpeace.pdf>.

<sup>86</sup> Gregory F. Treverton, *Hope - and the Big 'Ifs,'* 23 February 2003, [database on-line] (Santa Monica: RAND, February 2003, accessed 16 March 2004) available at <http://www.rand.org/hot/oped/022303SFC.html>.

<sup>87</sup> Patrick Clawson (ed.), *How to Build a New Iraq after Saddam*, (Washington DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2002), 76.

The failure to challenge the assumption that saw troops greeted as liberators effectively prevented the Bush Administration from anticipating the outcomes of removing Saddam and his regime. Consequently, troop numbers were insufficient to provide security in the major cities after the war. Moreover, decisions to protect certain key installations from looters while leaving others unguarded demonstrated a complete misunderstanding of Iraqi culture and their likely response. For example, on entering Baghdad, United States Army and Marine units moved to protect the Iraqi Oil Ministry.<sup>88</sup> The decision to protect this ministry alone, and not the Health Ministry, the National Museum or the National Library, did much to convince the people of Baghdad that America was only in Iraq for the oil.<sup>89</sup>

The operational level planners performed little better than their strategic masters when it came to anticipating the problems of post-conflict operations in Iraq. Their performance also suggests a disproportionate focus on combat operations. Such over-emphasis on combat would largely blind planners to post-conflict stability requirements. It would also demonstrate the misapplication of operational art. What is the evidence that this happened?

Svechin tells us that there can be no military solution to problems of strategy.<sup>90</sup> A focus on military operations alone, therefore cannot produce the desired strategic endstate. The Coalition Forces Land Component Commander, Lieutenant General David McKiernan, stated that his focus was the combat operation.<sup>91</sup> He passed responsibility post-conflict operations to Major General Albert Whitley, his deputy, two months before combat operations began. General McKiernan did not receive briefings on post-conflict operations after that time. While a focus on combat operations during the war is understandable, failing to prepare for the aftermath is inexcusable.

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<sup>88</sup> David Rieff, "Blueprint for a Mess," *New York Times*, 2 November 2003.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Svechin, 1926. 18.

<sup>91</sup> LTG McKiernan confirmed this fact at a meeting to discuss Operation IRAQI FREEDOM in Washington DC on 5 October 2003. The details were confirmed by one of LTG McKiernan's post-conflict operations planners, Col Richard Iron OBE, British Army, during a visit to SAMS in February 2003.



Despite doctrine that reinforces this point, operational planners with the ear of the Land Component Commander lost sight of the strategic objective and focused almost completely on tactics.<sup>92</sup>

Tactical commanders said that the lack of post war planning and direction made difficulties inevitable.<sup>93</sup> Third Infantry Division (Mechanized) After Action Report, which comments on the lack of training for postwar operations, is critical of higher levels of command, noting that many of the training deficiencies identified under the heading of stability and support operations resulted from the lack of a plan for post-conflict operations, or Phase IV operations.<sup>94</sup> The comments of many army officers involved in planning Operation IRAQI FREEDOM support the criticisms of post-conflict operational planning reflected in the report. This lack of planning effected the degree of preparedness of combat troops called upon to conduct post-conflict missions in Iraq.

The evidence points to a military organization that was dismally prepared for the security mission, armed nation building, low intensity warfare and governance when the regime fell in late March.<sup>95</sup> The governance mission is critical now, and will be in the future, and yet it is nothing

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<sup>92</sup> It is undeniable that planning for the post-conflict phase was conducted, indeed, several US army officers who worked on the post-conflict plans have stated that they anticipated the challenges of post-conflict Iraq. However, this planning took place in a compartmentalized environment, and was separate from the planning conducted to defeat the Iraqi military. The post-conflict planning, as has been confirmed by LTC Eassa in an interview on 25 November 2003, was deemed to be low priority by McKiernan. Consequently, LTC Eassa acknowledged that post-conflict planning had taken place, but noted that it was largely ignored at the operational level. One such plan for post-conflict phase was ECLIPSE II. LTC Eassa stated that the plan, although written, was never implemented.

<sup>93</sup> LTC Scott Rutter, commanding 2/7<sup>th</sup> 3 Infantry Division (Mechanized), in an interview with New York Times reporter David Rieff confirmed that information about post-conflict was non-existent. Moreover, at no time had he rehearsed or received any instructions from the chain of command on how to deal with looters, or distribute food. He was forced to make decisions without any direction from above. For more information, see David Rieff, "Blueprint for a Mess," *New York Times*, 2 November 2003.

<sup>94</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division (Mechanized) After Action Report, p 281. Internet <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2003/3id-aar-jul03.pdf>; last accessed 16 March 2004.

<sup>95</sup> For the purposes of this paper, governance is defined as the ability to provide the organization, machinery or agency that necessary to constitute the governing authority of a region or state in the absence of an indigenous governing apparatus. This is the authors working definition. In essence, fulfilling the governance task requires the ability to administer the region or state in the absence of an indigenous form

new. For example, planning for the occupation of Germany began in 1942, some three years before Germany surrendered.<sup>96</sup> Elements of the Defense Department began planning to bring down Saddam began in late 2001. According to members of General Jay Garner's team, planning for the post-war phase began on 20 January 2003.<sup>97</sup> The operational level of command did not anticipate the need to prepare for the governance mission in Iraq. This represents the failure to conduct a critical task and so jeopardized attainment of the strategic objectives. The Army War College warned of the dangers of failing to anticipate the challenges and plan accordingly months before execution of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM:

The possibility of the United States winning the war and losing the peace in Iraq is real and serious. Rehabilitating Iraq will consequently be an important challenge that threatens to consume huge amounts of resources without guaranteed results . . . Successfully executing the postwar occupation of Iraq is consequently every bit as important as winning the war. Preparing for the postwar rehabilitation of the Iraqi political system will probably be more difficult and complex than planning for combat. Massive resources need to be focused on this effort well before the first shot is fired. Thinking about war now and occupation later is not an acceptable solution. Without an overwhelming effort to prepare for occupation, the United States may find itself in a radically different world over the next few years, a world in which the threat of Saddam Hussein seems like a pale shadow of new problems in America's own making.<sup>98</sup>

There are two principle supplementary questions. The first asks whether there was sufficient information available before the war to enable leaders and planners the ability to foresee the challenges that may arise after it. The evidence provided indicates that the answer is, 'Yes.' The second supplementary question asks whether key civilian and military leaders displayed a disproportionate focus on combat operations. Again, evidence suggests that the

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of government. The task also requires that the interim governing body actively seek to empower the indigenous population with as much power as they can assume without destabilizing the area, while moving towards the end state of self-governance and withdrawal of the external governing apparatus.

<sup>96</sup> Earl F. Ziemke, "Improvising in Postwar Germany," in *Americans as Proconsuls* ed Robert Wolfe (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984) 57.

<sup>97</sup> Mark Fineman, Robin Wright, and Doyle McManus, "Preparing for War, Stumbling to Peace," *Los Angeles Times*, 18 July 2003.

<sup>98</sup> Conrad C. Crane, and W. Andrew Terrill, "Reconstructing Iraq: Insights, Challenges, and Missions for Military Forces in a Post-Conflict Scenario," *Strategic Studies Institute*, February 2003

answer is, 'Yes.' The adherence to a series of flawed assumptions about post-conflict Iraq, shaped by unchallenged mental models, supports the view that there was little focus at authoritative levels on what may happen after the combat phase. The initial assumption that envisaged American troops greeted as liberators is the most readily identifiable feature of the flawed mental model. It demonstrates how one unsubstantiated and unverified assumption can drive a plan and blind people to reality, despite a substantial body of opinion advising otherwise. Such actions are a textbook example of groupthink, where the group exhibits several major defects in decision-making that contribute to failures to solve problems adequately. For example, the group spends little or no time discussing factors they may have overlooked.<sup>99</sup> Group members make no attempt to obtain information from experts who can supply sound estimates of losses and gains to be expected from various courses of action.<sup>100</sup> The group show interest in facts and opinions that support their initially preferred policy – Chalabi's advice for example – but ignore facts and opinions that do not support their preferred policy, such as reports by RAND, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and the Future of Iraq Project.<sup>101</sup> Consequently, the group fails to prepare for, or even consider contingency plans to cope with foreseeable setbacks that could endanger the overall success of the chosen course of action. In this specific case, assumptions made at the strategic level, and driven by domestic and international political considerations of legitimacy, created the conditions for 'nested failures' at lower levels. The lack of preparedness of the tactical level is evidence of such failings.

The failure to anticipate shaped the way in which the levels of command thought about likely post-conflict scenarios. The failure to anticipate the nature of post-war Iraq was, in part, a result of groupthink. It was also an example of what happens when key leaders fail to collaborate

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[database on-line] available at <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/pubs/2003/reconirq/reconirq.htm> last accessed 16 March 2004.

<sup>99</sup> Irving L. Janis, 1982. 10

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. 10.

with other areas of expertise who may be more attune to the likely consequences of deposing Saddam.

## Collaboration

The primary research question asks whether the Operation IRAQI FREEDOM planners could have anticipated the challenges of post-war Iraq. In an operation as complex as IRAQI FREEDOM, all government capacity and capabilities should be utilized in order to maximize the chances of mission success. Collaboration is a critical task for post-conflict success. To what extent did key planners collaborate during preparation for IRAQI FREEDOM and, more critically, for the post-Saddam era?

A complete strategic, operational and tactical understanding of any situation is impossible. Through collaboration, planners can minimize gaps in their knowledge. It is therefore in the military's interest, and of the country whose interests they serve, to consult widely and gather as much information as possible. Joint Doctrine states that interagency coordination forges the vital link between the military instrument of power and the economic, political and diplomatic elements of the government, as well as between non-governmental agencies.<sup>102</sup> It stresses that commanders and joint planners must consider all elements of national power in order to best understand and recognize which agencies are best qualified to assist in achieving the objective. This may include government agencies, partner nations, non-governmental organizations, and regional and international organizations as well as agencies of the host country.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid. 10.

<sup>102</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-08, *Interagency Coordination During Joint Operations*, Volume I, (Washington DC: Department of Defense, 1996), Executive Summary.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid. vi.

Planning should be a collaborative effort, inclusive of the expertise inside and outside government.<sup>104</sup> The previous chapter demonstrates, however, that IRAQI FREEDOM planning was an exclusive process. By refusing to collaborate with those outside the Pentagon, and often inside the Pentagon, the Defense Department denied itself the ability to anticipate many of the complexities associated with defining strategies for a post-conflict Iraq.

Planning conducted by Feith's Office of Special Plans relied almost exclusively on Ahmed Chalabi and associates for information.<sup>105</sup> Chalabi, who left Iraq in 1958, supplied the Defense Department with information from defectors who claimed that Saddam was developing weapons of mass destruction. The Defense Department even envisaged Chalabi becoming the leader of an Iraqi government 'in waiting' that could be inserted into Iraq at the end of the war.<sup>106</sup>

Trust in Chalabi was not widespread, however. The Army's Strategic Studies Institute warned against over reliance in him.<sup>107</sup> The Central Intelligence Agency suspected that he had misappropriated government funds earmarked for armed resistance by Iraqi exile groups against Saddam in the mid 1990's.<sup>108</sup> The State Department doubted Chalabi's integrity and was dismissive of the Defense Department's reliance upon him as a source of information, choosing

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid. Chapter II. The chapter notes that Department of Defense cooperation with external bodies is one way of countering shrinking military resources, and lack of expertise in certain areas. The chapter notes also that far from being an *ad hoc* process, the interagency process at the national level has great precedent. The interagency process is grounded within the Constitution and established by law in the National Security Act of 1947. This act codified a "Joint Plan-Making Body." Joint Publication 3-08 states that the intent of the Act was to assist the President in executing the authority to protect the United States. (page II-2).

<sup>105</sup> Ahmed Chalabi is a secular Shiite Muslim with a background in mathematics and banking. In the early 1990's he became close to Richard Perle, who was at the time an assistant secretary of defense in the Reagan administration. In 1992, Chalabi formed the Iraqi National Congress, which became an umbrella organization of Iraqi groups in exile. Chalabi attended a series of neo-conservative conferences on post-Saddam Iraq organized by Perle and through him, became close to Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz. This group formed the core of the Project for the New American Century and lobbied the Clinton Administration constantly throughout the 1990's for an invasion to topple Saddam Hussein. (Their letter to President Clinton can be found on the internet at <http://www.newamericancentury.org/iraq/clintonletter.htm>).

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<sup>107</sup> Crane and Terrill, 2003.

<sup>108</sup> David Rieff, "Blueprint for a Mess," *New York Times*, 2 November 2003.

instead to form 17 working groups of Sunnis, Shiites, monarchists, communists and ex-military to collaborate on the Future of Iraq Project. Thomas Warrick, a State Department Arabist, was appointed to lead these groups.<sup>109</sup>

An attempt to synthesize the work of the Defense and State Department planners on post-conflict reconstruction took place at the National Defense University on 21-22 February 2003 – less than one month before the invasion of Iraq.<sup>110</sup> The results were inconclusive and served only to highlight the woeful state of planning for this phase of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, in comparison to the advanced level of planning for combat operations.<sup>111</sup> The subsequent animosity between the Defense and State Departments eventually led Secretary Rumsfeld to order Thomas Warrick's removal from Jay Garner's team just before its deployment.<sup>112</sup>

By refusing to collaborate in planning efforts, the Defense Department's senior leadership ignored warnings from intelligence, military and regional experts that Coalition forces would not be greeted "with sweets and flowers."<sup>113</sup> The Central Intelligence Agency warned in Summer 2002 that the post-war period would prove more problematic than the war to overthrow Saddam. It also informed the White House that some members of Saddam's Republican Guard

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<sup>109</sup> Crane and Terrill, 2003. Press release from the State Department with opening statement by Colin Powell, "Duty to the Future: Free Iraqis Plan for a New Iraq," internet <http://www.unikassel.de/fb10/frieden/regionen/Irak/future.html> last accessed 14 December 2003. The statement includes Secretary Powell's vision for the Future of Iraq project, which seeks to bring together free Iraqis with expertise in a wide range of professions, to discuss concrete proposals for the rebuilding of Iraq.

<sup>110</sup> Mark Fineman, Robin Wright and Doyle McManus, "Preparing for War, Stumbling to Peace," *Los Angeles Times*, 18 July 2003. A former CIA analyst noted the "The Messiah could not have organized a sufficient relief and reconstruction or humanitarian effort in that short time."

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> George Packer "War After the War: What Washington doesn't see in Iraq," *The New Yorker*, 24 November 2003 [journal on-line]; available from [http://www.newyorker.com/printable/?fact/031124fa\\_fact1](http://www.newyorker.com/printable/?fact/031124fa_fact1); Internet; accessed 16 March 2004. 58.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid. According to Packer, Ahmed Chalabi and elements of his Iraqi National Congress told President Bush that US troops would be greeted as liberators, with "sweets and flowers." Senior figures including Vice President Cheney, Secretary Rumsfeld and Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz seized upon this image and promulgated it widely. This is reflected in Vice President Cheney's interview on NBC's "Meet the Press," in February 2003, where Cheney states that he expects troops will be greeted as liberators.

and Fedayeen had plans to continue resistance after the war.<sup>114</sup> Similarly, the Defense Intelligence Agency reported in 2002 that post-war Iraq would challenge the allies' ability to stop various parts of the country falling apart.<sup>115</sup>

Inter-governmental collaboration during preparation for IRAQI FREEDOM was poor. This was demonstrated clearly when the Department of Defense leadership claimed that they received only vague intelligence on the nature of post-Saddam Iraq.<sup>116</sup> In response, the Central Intelligence Agency took the unusual step of issuing a statement noting that intelligence officials were "utterly consistent in arguing that reconstruction rather than war would be the most problematic segment of overthrowing Saddam's regime."<sup>117</sup> Eventually, Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz admitted that the Department of Defense had made some considerable errors.<sup>118</sup> It had underestimated the risk that the Ba'ath Party and other irredentist hardliners would present a continuing security threat after Saddam Hussein fell from power, and overestimated Iraqi popular support for the war.<sup>119</sup>

The White House, the Office of the Vice President and particularly the Office of the Secretary of Defense ignored repeated warnings about post-war Iraq from early 2002.<sup>120</sup> This approach forced the Defense Department to plan in isolation, and blinded the military planners whom they directed, to the dangers that lay ahead. At the operational level, the military leadership ignored doctrinal guidance to collaborate and adopt an interagency approach, "building upon both

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<sup>114</sup> Walter Pincus, "Spy Agencies Warned of Iraq Resistance," *Washington Post*, 9 September 2003, 1.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Mark Fineman, Robin Wright and Doyle McManus, "Preparing for War, Stumbling to Peace," *Los Angeles Times*, 18 July 2003.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, *Iraq and Conflict Termination: the Road to Guerilla War?* 28 July 2003 [database on-line] (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 28 July 2003, accessed 16 March 2004) available at [http://www.csis.org/features/Iraq\\_ConflictTerm.pdf](http://www.csis.org/features/Iraq_ConflictTerm.pdf).

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Karen Kwiatkowski, "Career Officer Does Eye-opening Stint Inside Pentagon," *The Beacon Journal*, 31 July 2003.

the differences in agency cultures and the core competencies . . . that each brings to the forum.”<sup>121</sup>

Central Command’s Combatant Commander resisted advice from the Joint Chiefs of Staff and State Department planners.<sup>122</sup> Consequently, warfighting remained the focus at the operational level.

This approach reflected the strong desire of operational level commanders to avoid involvement in the complex political issues of nation-building and military commitment to missions other than direct warfighting.<sup>123</sup> Had the operational level collaborated with, and sought the views of other elements of government, they would have realized that the significant obstacles in the path to IRAQI FREEDOM’s strategic endstate lay in the post-conflict phase. Warnings pointed to violence and insurgency. Dealing with those challenges required considerable intellectual horsepower and preparation of tactical units. Unfortunately, the operational level leadership were not prepared to expend their energies in this direction.

It is arguable that a failure to collaborate is the cause of a failure to anticipate, but this is too simplistic. Both tasks are critical and while there is overlap, it is not sufficient to say that collaboration would make anticipation of future events more likely. Anticipation requires a willingness to accept the assessments, advice and findings of outsiders even when they challenge or contradict firmly held beliefs. Collaboration implies a willingness to consider such information and an acceptance that others may hold the key to success. The strategic and operational levels failed to collaborate.

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<sup>121</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-08, *Interagency Coordination During Joint Operations*, Volume I, (Washington DC: Department of Defense, 1996). II-1.

<sup>122</sup> Mark Fineman, Robin Wright and Doyle McManus, “Preparing for War, Stumbling to Peace,” *Los Angeles Times*, 18 July 2003.

<sup>123</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, *Iraq and Conflict Termination: the Road to Guerilla War?* 28 July 2003 [database on-line] (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 28 July 2003, accessed 16 March 2004) available at [http://www.csis.org/features/Iraq\\_ConflictTerm.pdf](http://www.csis.org/features/Iraq_ConflictTerm.pdf).



## Preparation

Analysis of the two previous tasks focused on the failings at the strategic and operational level. The critical task of preparing for conflict may seem obvious, but were troops properly prepared for the missions and tasks they were required to perform in post-war Iraq? Army doctrine is specific about the need to prepare for the nature of the impending mission. Reflecting the United States Army's Clausewitzian aspirations, Field Manual 3-0, 'Operations,' contains the following quotation: "No one starts a war – or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so – without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war."<sup>124</sup> Objectivity is a principle of war; it means ensuring all actions contribute to the goals of the higher headquarters, which, "at the strategic level . . . means having a clear vision of the theater endstate . . . commanders need to appreciate political ends and understand how the military conditions they achieve contribute to them."<sup>125</sup> Field Manual 3-0 lists the cycle of full spectrum operations as plan, prepare, execute, assess. Preparation is defined as the activities conducted by the unit before execution to improve its ability to conduct impending operations.<sup>126</sup>

Preparation is the responsibility of the unit commander. It is unlikely that every unit commander involved in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM failed to consider that combat operations may not achieve the political endstate, and that post-conflict reconstruction might not be as easy as advertised. This therefore begs the question, Why were troops not better trained, equipped and prepared for the nature of operations they were to conduct after major combat operations ended? The after action report of Third Infantry Division contains the following observation:

Higher headquarters did not provide the 3ID(M) [Third Infantry Division (Mechanized)] with a plan for Phase IV [post-conflict reconstruction]. As a result, 3ID(M) transitioned into Phase IV operations in the absence of guidance. Division planners should

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<sup>124</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*. (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2001). 4-12.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.* 4-12.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.* 6-1.

have drafted detailed plans on Phase IV operations that would have allow (*sic*) it to operate independently of outside guidance from higher headquarters. Critical requirements should have been identified prior to LD [line of departure], and a plan to execute a SASO [Stability and Support Operations] mission for at least 30 days should have been ready to execute immediately.<sup>127</sup>

It is surprising that a division did not prepare its units to execute Stability and Support Operations as part of overall training for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. Were such remarks confined to 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division alone, they might be written off as one units' attempts to dodge accusations that they had failed to prepare their troops. However, other units have made similar observations. The Commanding Officer of the 15<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit remarked that his troops were expected to fight the enemy, provide security and restart a government – the latter two tasks they were not trained for and had not expected or prepared to do.<sup>128</sup>

Undoubtedly, part of the problem was that there were too few troops to conduct the tasks required in the post-conflict phase. The author of a State Department report that made the case for greater numbers of soldiers before the war, stated in November 2003 that there were still insufficient troops in theatre, “And I don’t fault the people who are here. There’s no way any fault should be put on the kids in the Third Infantry Division or the brigade commanders. The question is, why weren’t more people put in? That was the concern of my project – were we prepared to do what it took in the postwar phase?”<sup>129</sup>

The shortfall in manpower and preparations for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM clearly points to a problem that affects not just the tactical level. However, it is at the tactical level that the requirement for thorough preparation matters most. The critical task of preparing for the true

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<sup>127</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division (Mechanized) After Action Report, p 281. Internet <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2003/3id-aar-jul03.pdf>; last accessed 16 March 2004.

<sup>128</sup> Colonel Thomas Waldhauser, Commanding Officer 15<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit, quoted in Mark Fineman, Robin Wright and Doyle McManus, “Preparing for War, Stumbling to Peace,” *Los Angeles Times*, 18 July 2003.

<sup>129</sup> George Packer “War After the War: What Washington doesn’t see in Iraq,” *The New Yorker*, 24 November 2003 [journal on-line]; available from [http://www.newyorker.com/printable/?fact/031124fa\\_fact1](http://www.newyorker.com/printable/?fact/031124fa_fact1); Internet; accessed 16 March 2004. 58.

nature of conflict to be fought is required of all levels of command. The strategic and operational levels of command must make every effort to ensure that the tactical level is ready for the challenges ahead. If the strategic and operational levels ignore the real challenges that post-war Iraq would present, it falls to the tactical level of command to prepare troops for likely missions and tasks. Judging from the evidence, this did not happen. Instead, the tactical level of command seemed content to prepare solely for warfighting operations, ignoring the lessons learnt from previous operations which showed winning the peace is harder than winning the war.<sup>130</sup>

The hypothesis of this monograph is that the post-conflict challenges currently experienced by Allied forces in Iraq are the result of a failure by the three levels of command to achieve three critical tasks. The three critical tasks examined were those of anticipate, collaborate and prepare. These critical tasks are the criteria against which research was measured in order to answer the secondary and tertiary research questions. These questions help answer the primary research question, “Could the planners for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM have anticipated the challenges of post war Iraq?” Building on the research and analysis presented in this chapter, it remains to address the primary research question in full.

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<sup>130</sup> Matthews, Jessica Tuchman, “Now for the Hard Part,” in *From Victory to Success: Afterwar Policy in Iraq*, Foreign policy and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Special Report, 2003.

## Chapter 4

Could the military planners of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM have foreseen the challenges of post-war Iraq? The initial answer to the primary research question is, frustratingly, ‘yes,’ and ‘no.’ First, yes. Yes, because the research and analysis contained in previous chapters demonstrates that there were ample warnings about the likelihood of an insurgency following the collapse of the Ba’athist regime. Answers to two of the quaternary questions demonstrate the need to prepare troops to win the peace after the combat phase.<sup>131</sup> History repeatedly shows that victory in war seldom, if ever, achieves the desired strategic endstate and that the post-conflict phase is of absolute importance.<sup>132</sup> A key secondary question asked whether sufficient information was available before the war to enable leaders to draw different conclusions about the likely nature of Iraq after the Ba’athist downfall. The discussion demonstrated that the war planners had access to the information and this accounts for the ‘yes’ answer to the above question.

Explaining the ‘no’ part of the answer is more complex, but is essential in order to offer an objective answer to the primary research question. The reason the IRAQI FREEDOM planners could not have foreseen the challenges of post-war Iraq is because there were simply too many obstacles to overcome to generate courses of action that provided for the post-conflict period. The remaining pages will focus on why the answer to the primary question is ‘no,’ and will address the two fundamental obstacles that prevented the planners from realizing the likely outcomes of post-Saddam Iraq. The first obstacle is the rigid mental model within which the military planners

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<sup>131</sup> The United States’ record of success at nation building is not good. With reference to 15 such attempts between 1893 and 2003, only four can be considered a success. The four successes are Panama, Grenada, Japan and West Germany. The failures span from Cuba, to Vietnam, to Afghanistan. For more information on this subject, an excellent collection of articles has been jointly published by *Foreign Policy* magazine and the Carnegie Endowment, available online at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/MiddleEast/index.cfm>. See James Jay Carafano, *After Iraq: Learning the War’s Lessons*, <http://www.heritage.org/Research/MiddleEast/bg1664.cfm>

were constrained. The second is the nature of the United States military culture, which is perhaps yet to adapt to the challenges of future conflict, and the missions and tasks that the continuing war against terrorism is likely to produce.

Chapter 3 provided the burden of proof that each level of command failed to achieve at least one of the critical tasks. It remains to synthesize the evidence and offer a complete answer to the primary research question. Cohen and Gooch's failure matrix supports the answer. The three criteria of anticipate, collaborate and prepare form three critical tasks against which the performance of the three levels of command was measured. The three levels of command, tactical, operational and strategic, are listed on the 'Y' axis; the critical tasks on the 'X' axis. The remainder of the table comprises analysis of the performance, and demonstrates where failures occurred. The series of arrows indicate the critical pathway to misfortune providing a graphical depiction of the key failures, and the attendant consequences.

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<sup>132</sup> James W. Reed, "Should Deterrence Fail: War Termination and Conflict Planning," *Parameters*, September 1993, 41-52.

Critical Task	Anticipate	Collaborate	Prepare
<b>Command Level</b>			
Strategic	<b>1.1 Critical failure:</b> Office of Vice President/Secretary of Defense and senior military leadership did not consider worst case scenarios for post-Saddam Iraq. Ignored warnings from intelligence agencies about post-war threats. Refusal to challenge inappropriate mental models and resource IRAQI FREEDOM with the necessary level of manpower. Effects of groupthink.	<b>1.2 Critical Failure:</b> No integration of planning within government departments/ agencies. Defense Department refusal to collaborate with State Department (ignored Future of Iraq Project) caused by political infighting that blinded decision makers and planners in Office of Secretary of Defense to the possible challenges troops may face in post-war Iraq. Over-reliance on Iraqi National Congress & Ahmed Chalabi.	<b>1.3</b> Flawed mental models, unverified assumptions and inter-departmental politics negatively shaped the ability of subordinate levels to foresee the challenges of post-war Iraq, and prepare accordingly.
Operational	<b>2.1 Failure:</b> Adopted the assumptions provided by strategic level without verification. Focused almost completely on warfighting operations; neglected post-conflict planning and so failed to adhere to doctrinal norms.	<b>2.2 Failure:</b> Compartmentalized planning process and focus on combat operations led commanders and planners to subordinate planning for post-conflict phase. Failure to collaborate outside small circle of planners caused planners to lose sight of strategic objectives. Failed to apply operational art correctly.	<b>2.3 Critical Failure:</b> Focus on warfighting operations to the detriment of all else meant that tactical units were not resourced or prepared for security and stability operations required after combat.
Tactical	<b>3.1 Critical Failure:</b> Focused on training for combat operations at expense of more complex yet more relevant stability operations required after the war. Did not venture outside the box constructed by the operational level.	<b>3.2</b> Not applicable	<b>3.3 Critical Failure:</b> Tactical commanders did not challenge the grossly over-optimistic view of post-war Iraq. Troops were not prepared or equipped for counter-insurgency operations. Commanders failed in their duty to prepare troops for the missions and tasks required of them.

*Note:* Arrows indicate causal links. Solid lines indicate primary pathways; dashed lines, secondary pathways.

*Table 2. Critical task matrix.*

The most significant threat to the Bush Administrations' strategic objectives for Iraq is the ongoing insurgency and violence against American forces. The matrix shows that the failure to anticipate and collaborate at the strategic and operational level prevented troops at the tactical

level from preparing to meet the challenges of the insurgency. As a result, the insurgency has spread and attainment of the strategic endstate remains illusive.<sup>133</sup>

The critical path of failure flows from the strategic level. It demonstrates the causal linkages between failures of policy, planning and improper direction, and the ability of the tactical level to conduct the tasks required of them in reality. In the case of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, table 2 indicates specifically that the failure to collaborate at the strategic level had a significant negative influence on the ability of the strategic and operational levels to anticipate the likely scenarios that might arise in post-Saddam Iraq. This shaped the way in which the tactical level staffs' prepared for the missions and tasks they believed would be required to perform in the post-war environment. While these staffs should have prepared better for contingencies in the post-conflict environment, their focus on the maneuver phase is understandable. Nevertheless, their lack of preparedness for certain non-combat tasks remains an example of a critical failure.

The evidence from Chapter 3's discussion, summarized in table 2, demonstrates a failure by the strategic level of command to anticipate the likely problems in Iraq. Evidence presented in Chapter 3's discussion of mental models and groupthink demonstrated what amounts to a refusal within the senior leadership of the Department of Defense to accept that troops would be welcomed as anything other than liberators.<sup>134</sup> The civilian leadership of the Defense Department are frequently accused of adopting an unrealistic appreciation of post-war Iraq. Part of the reason why the Bush Administration's senior figures adopted such an optimistic outlook for Iraq must be that they genuinely believed that after the downfall of Saddam, all would be well. That these views persisted within the highest levels of the government is a result of the failure by the civilian

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<sup>133</sup> Note that achieving the three critical tasks does not imply that the challenges of post-war Iraq would be transparent. Rather, achieving the critical tasks ensures that the Operation IRAQI FREEDOM planning organization is best placed to identify the challenges that may lie ahead. The antithesis of this position is that failure to achieve one or more of the critical tasks greatly reduces the ability of the planning organization to identify future challenges and problematic issues.

leadership, particularly within the Department of Defense, to challenge their strongly held mental models of post-Saddam Iraq. This can be attributed, in part, to groupthink and perhaps to too close an affiliation between leaders like Cheney, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz with Ahmed Chalabi.

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Answers to supplementary questions in the previous chapter suggest that the flawed mental model of post-war Iraq that persisted within the Department of Defense was largely responsible for shaping the work of subordinates and planners at lower levels. This mental model survived well into the war because the Defense Department restricted strategic planning to those within Douglas Feith's Office of Special Plans. This closed group seemed to ignore the views of outsiders that challenged their assumptions – evidence of groupthink—demonstrated when the Chief of Staff of the Army challenged their position and assumptions on troop numbers required to depose Saddam and secure Iraq.<sup>136</sup>

The strategic level of command did not accomplish the critical tasks of anticipation and collaboration. Notwithstanding that information on the probable outcomes of post-conflict Iraq was available, the failure to achieve these critical tasks at this formative level denied the strategic level the ability to foresee that challenges that lay ahead. Turning to the operational level of command, the limitations emplaced by their superiors adversely affected their subordinate's ability to plan for the likely post-Saddam Iraq scenarios. The research from Chapter 2 points to several reasons why the operational level failed to foresee the challenges of post-war Iraq. First,

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<sup>134</sup> David Rieff, "Blueprint for a Mess," *New York Times*, 2 November 2003. "Sweets and flowers" is the phrase used by Ahmed Chalabi to describe how he thought the Iraqi public would greet US troops.

<sup>135</sup> As noted in previous chapters, the association between this group dates back many years. All have consistently pushed for a tougher policy on Iraq, and were instrumental in persuading Congress to pass the 1998 Iraq Liberation Act, which made regime change in Iraq the official policy of the United States. Several press articles discuss the relationship between Chalabi and current Administration officials. A good discuss is offered by David Rieff, "Blueprint for a Mess," *New York Times*, 2 November 2003.

<sup>136</sup> The reference here is to then-Chief of Staff of the Army General Eric Shinseki's testimony to Congress that to achieve the strategic goals in Iraq would require "several hundred thousand" soldiers. This testimony was given on 27 February. One day later both the Secretary of Defense and Deputy Secretary of



as Clausewitz reminds us, war cannot remain isolated from political factors.<sup>137</sup> The impact of politics, therefore, cannot be ignored. Second, the influence of American army culture upon the way in which IRAQI FREEDOM was planned and executed requires evaluation. Finally, the problem of mental models arises again.

Taking the last factor first, the effect that unchallenged mental models have upon military planners cannot be over-emphasized. Planning for OIF, as demonstrated in the previous chapters' discussion, seems to offer a lesson on the dangers of mental models. It certainly gives credence to Senge's explanation of why ideas fail, as he notes that ingrained assumptions or generalizations about how the world works can lead us to ignore differing views. The only way to reduce the negative influence of mental models is through rigorous scrutiny, often by those outside the organization.<sup>138</sup> This concept has already been discussed in depth and laboring the issue is unhelpful. It is a fact that being human, the operational level commanders are as subject to the constraining influences of mental models as anyone else.

Svechin wrote that an unsound strategy for war is the result of unsound politics. He continued stating that, no matter how hard a war strategy tries to gain emancipation from bad politics, it is doomed to failure and condemned to pay for all the sins of politics.<sup>139</sup> The discussion in Chapter 3 on the post-war assumptions made at the strategic level suggests that the operational level failed to verify these assumptions before using them. Do Svechin's observations remain true today, and if so is there a need for the military to try and mitigate the influence of bad politics on future military strategy?<sup>140</sup> Alternatively, should military leaders try and balance the effects of

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Defense denounced Shinseki's views as being "wildly off the mark." Chapter 3 discusses this matter in more detail.

<sup>137</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and trans. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 577-627.

<sup>138</sup> Senge, 1990. 199.

<sup>139</sup> Svechin, 1927. 84.

<sup>140</sup> It is noted that in a modern democratic society, the military will always be subject to political control. The purpose of the following discussion is not to suggest that the military try to circumvent that

‘bad politics’ and simply to continue along the path set by politicians? It seems that IRAQI FREEDOM’s senior military commanders selected this latter approach. Why did this happen?

Max Manwaring, remaining true to Svechin’s ideal of operational art, believes it essential that the supreme political authority define the strategic endstate.<sup>141</sup> There must be a continuous dialogue between politicians and the military to identify and adapt the conflicts’ strategic objectives. Collaboration between the political leadership and the military commander is essential. This is true to the founding principles of democracy whereby the military are subordinate to the political power.

Bruce C. Bade notes, however, that the American army’s approach to strategy tends to sever the links between military action and the political objective. The result is a clumsy, often inconclusive contribution to achieving the stated strategic goals.<sup>142</sup> The decision to separate planning for combat and planning for post-combat, as Chapter 3 demonstrates, does not represent the collaborative ideal. Consequently, the campaign plan, while undoubtedly reflecting the aspirations of the post-war planners, retained a combat-centric focus, and so neglected efforts to anticipate the likely outcomes of deposing the Ba’athist regime.

A related issue then, is the military’s ability to challenge the inappropriate guidance from their civilian leaders. Too often, the military busy themselves expending vast amounts of time planning how best to mobilize and move men and materiel to the war within compartmentalized

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control. Instead, the purpose is to suggest that the military must realize their role as a source of national power and learn to act accordingly within the guidelines of operational art. If the military are to assist the government in achieving their stated strategic endstate, the military must accept that force must be applied in such a way that it furthers these goals, and not simply a purely military objective. The military must therefore produce plans that pursue these goals and in particular, consider that post-conflict stage of war plans in great detail, as it is only from here that strategic success can be achieved.

<sup>141</sup> Max G. Manwaring, “Limited War and Conflict Control,” in *Conflict Termination and Military Strategy* ed Stephen J. Cimbala and Keith A. Dunn (Boulder: West View Press) 61.

<sup>142</sup> Bruce C. Bade, “War Termination: Why Don’t we Plan for it?” in *Essay’s on Strategy* ed. John N. Petrie (Washington DC: National Defense University Press, 1994) 205-227. Bruce C. Bade subsequently worked for the Office of Secretary of Defense after graduating from the National Defense University. This essay was named a distinguished essay in the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Strategy Essay Contest.

organizations while losing sight of the strategic objectives and endstate.<sup>143</sup> The political leaders, on the other hand, tend to provide guidance that may well conflict with the facts of the military domain.

In reality, the military cannot expect political guidance to be clear and succinct. Statements concerning objectives are always couched in vague terms lacking the specifics that most military professionals desire. General Maxwell Taylor noted that politicians would rarely provide clear guidance for a campaign because they could be held to account if events went awry.<sup>144</sup> Similarly, presidents will seek to limit policy goals to broad generalities such as peace, prosperity and goodwill; what Maxwell terms “unimpeachable ideals” that are of little use in determining specific objectives for the military.<sup>145</sup> The military should therefore accept that they will seldom receive clear instructions on the conflict termination phase from their political masters. Military planners should therefore keep the stated political objective firmly in mind. While often lofty and idealistic, it alone contains the kernel of strategic guidance around which the campaign plan should develop. Planners could then develop campaign plans that truly exhibit operational art. The consequences of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM demonstrate the pitfalls of an unhealthy obsession with combat operations.

According to Jeffrey Record, “the United States has a track record of botching war termination.”<sup>146</sup> Yet the culture of the United States Army, as defined in Chapter 3, is one steeped in a tradition of professionalism, where the potential application of massive combat power ensures that no other country is remotely capable of challenging America’s conventional might.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Fred C. Ikle, 1991. 2.

<sup>144</sup> Maxwell D Taylor, *Precarious Security*, (New York: Norton, 1976) 92.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid. 92.

<sup>146</sup> Jeffrey Record, “The Bush Doctrine and War with Iraq.” *Parameters*, Vol XXXIII, No 1, March 2003.

<sup>147</sup> This refers to the discussion under the heading ‘Anticipating the challenges of the Post-conflict Environment.’ It is not the place of this study to examine the general aspects of military culture. The focus

In reality, terminating wars in a manner that produces a better peace is an inherently difficult task. The occasions when the United States was involved in military operations other than war during the past decade have drawn considerable criticism from military analysts.

Colonel Harry Summers described the fascination with such operations as a politico-military fad, arguing that involvement in the array of national and international crises since 1989 were a dangerous development that threatened the combat readiness of America's forces. Moreover, it eroded the 'warrior mindset,' whereby the 'warrior' is completely focused on destroying the military forces and the will of the enemy.<sup>148</sup> This mental model has had a formative (and negative) impact upon United States' military culture. It is partly responsible for a predilection towards large-scale combat operations. Consequently, the Army retains the thinking, infrastructure and forces appropriate for a large-scale war that may not materialize, while failing to adapt to conduct the smaller, more complex engagements of the type that seem to be occurring with increasing frequency.<sup>149</sup>

The doctrine of Rapid, Decisive Operations is intended to rectify this problem in part. However, post-combat operations in Iraq have demonstrated to anyone who chooses to notice that the rapid, if not decisive defeat of the enemy did not achieve the Bush Administration's strategic endstate. Thus, while there may have been enough forces in Iraq to conduct combat operations, it soon became evident in towns such as Baghdad that no additional forces were available to handle the critical job of maintaining law and order. Consequently, thieves looted hospitals and museums, destroyed valuable government records, and crime in Baghdad became endemic overnight. By preparing for only one aspect of the mission – combat – rather than anticipating the

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on conflict termination requires only that there be discussion of those aspects of the United States military culture that impact on this subject.

<sup>148</sup> James Warren, "Small Wars and Military Culture," *Society*, September/October 1999; 36, 6, 56.

<sup>149</sup> The RAND Corporation raised this issue as early as 1996, when James Dewar published *Army Culture and Planning in a Time of Great Change*. Dewar, James et al. *Army Culture and Planning in a Time of Great Change* (Santa Monica, California: RAND, 1996) p 28.

wider range of contingencies, commanders were left to make unpleasant choices between securing the peace, and ensuring force protection. The consequences of having to make such choices plagues American forces in Iraq to this day.<sup>150</sup>

The research and analysis demonstrates conclusively that the military's focus was on the military operations aimed at defeating the Iraqi army. Planning for post-conflict operations was not a priority.<sup>151</sup> This is despite the twentieth century experiences of the United States Army that post-combat operations are not only necessary, but are normally the decisive phase in any campaign that is serious about achieving the strategic endstate. General (retired) Anthony Zinni has been a critic of this aspect of planning for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, noting that the American military, "probably since Vietnam, maybe before, became more and more saddled with conflict resolution – strange conflict resolution – peacekeeping, humanitarian efforts, nation building. The military has resisted this. They don't like it. They're not trained for it. But there's no one else to do it and it continues to be the mission that confronts us."<sup>152</sup>

Using the Afghanistan and Iraq experience as precedents, it seems that the American military can expect to conduct more of these type of operations as part of the war against terrorism.<sup>153</sup> The United States Army culture reinforces the need to conduct high-intensity combat operations as a primary role; "to fight and win the nation's wars."<sup>154</sup> Such a mental model is both acceptable and desirable. The disdain with which the military views peace support

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<sup>150</sup> The inherent dangers of over-reliance on the doctrine of Rapid, Decisive Operations is the subject of numerous articles. Some of the material for this section of argument comes from Christopher Ankerson and Losel Tethong's article "Rapid Decisive Ops are Risky Business," online at [www.usni.org/Proceedings/Articles03/PROankerson10.htm](http://www.usni.org/Proceedings/Articles03/PROankerson10.htm) last accessed 03 November 2003. An further excellent article on Army Transformation, which incorporates Rapid, Decisive Operations, was published by Frederick W. Kagan for the *Wall Street Journal* on 12 November 2003. It is available online at [www.opinionjournal.com/forms/printThis.html?id+110004289](http://www.opinionjournal.com/forms/printThis.html?id+110004289) last accessed 18 November 2003.

<sup>151</sup> Colonel Richard Iron OBE, during Q&A at SAMS, November 2003.

<sup>152</sup> General (R) Anthony Zinni, in an interview with Jim Lehrer, 30 September 2003, online at [www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/military/july-dec03/zinni\\_09-30.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/military/july-dec03/zinni_09-30.html) last accessed 02 October 2003.

<sup>153</sup> Robert Kaplan's remarks to SAMS, 05 February 2004.

<sup>154</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*. (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2001). 1-2.

operations, however, is not only undesirable, but threatens America's ability to respond to the nature of challenges in the twenty-first century. The evidence from authors such as Cimbala or Handel illustrate that the military, especially the Army, continue to view military operations other than war either as a 'cop out' or as something that will take care of itself.<sup>155</sup> It seems that the operational leadership assumed that an American victory on the battlefield would almost automatically lead to a better peace. If the American military experience of the twenty-first century has demonstrated anything, it is that this assumption is flawed. The army in particular should therefore embrace the fact that post-combat operations are the bridge over which armed conflict transitions into more peaceful forms of interaction, and through which the strategic aims can be achieved.

The impression derived from the research suggests that influential strategic and operational military leaders, most notably the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Commander Central Command and Commander Third Army, lost sight of the strategic endstate when developing the plan for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.<sup>156</sup> While many planners sought to highlight the importance of post-conflict operations, the leadership at the operational and strategic levels retained a focus on combat operations. The result is that counter-insurgency planning continues on an *ad hoc* basis.<sup>157</sup> For example, United States' Army planners have attempted to use the Israeli model for solving an insurgency. Based on the degree of success experienced by the Israeli's to date, this course of action seems unlikely to succeed.<sup>158</sup> That the Army has resorted to

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<sup>155</sup> Stephen J. Cimbala, 1987. Cimbala refers to a traditional military view on war termination planning as being a "cop out," because the military tend to seek outright victory over the enemy.

<sup>156</sup> See Mark Fineman, Robin Wright and Doyle McManus, "Preparing for War, Stumbling to Peace," *Los Angeles Times*, 18 July 2003; and David Rieff, "Blueprint for a Mess," *New York Times*, 2 November 2003.

<sup>157</sup> For example, the incorporation of SAMS, CGSOC and CAS3 into the process designed to solve existing problems in Iraq that were arguably foreseeable.

<sup>158</sup> Wilkins, Dexter "Tough New Tactics by US Tighten Grip on Iraq Towns," *New York Times*, 7 December 2003. Wilkins refers to the American army's new practice of destroying the homes of insurgents when they are arrested, and arresting family members in order to apply pressure to insurgents and terrorists.

such methods serves only to highlight the issue of a military culture that is inappropriate and which leads planners to select courses of action that, while successful in the short-term, are unlikely to achieve the strategic goal.

George Packer concludes that failures at the strategic and operational levels of command, amongst primary civilian and military leaders, have forestalled progress in Iraq.<sup>159</sup> The answers to supplementary questions in Chapter 3 support this position. The refusal to consider alternative scenarios, and to collaborate with other government agencies and authoritative bodies, denied those at the tactical level the opportunity to adequately prepare for the nature of missions and tasks that they now conduct. The combination of closed mental models, groupthink, and a military culture that is fast becoming wholly unsuited to the contemporary operating environment prevented Operation IRAQI FREEDOM planners from being able to foresee the challenges of post-war Iraq.

Military commanders and planners at all levels allowed the civilian leadership to construct a box from flawed mental models, selective information and a grossly optimistic view of events, outside of which the same commanders refused to venture or even think. These initial circumstances, together with a culture that looks disparagingly upon military operations other than war, combined to create conditions that prevented the military at any level of command to achieve the critical tasks of anticipation, collaboration and preparedness.

If the goal of the political decision-maker is to resolve the issues for which the war was begun, and create a better situation after the war than that which existed before, the emphasis of military strategy must shift from its current, narrow preoccupation with destroying the enemy.

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The Israeli Defense Forces have used such methods extensively against Palestinian terrorists during the second Intifada (and for decades before) without measurable success. The New York Times article highlights the danger of such tactics, which diminish the immediate threat to American troops, but alienate the very people the same troops are trying to win over.

Military commanders and planners must consider how best to use military means to achieve political ends.<sup>160</sup> Military strategy, espoused by the United States Army under the heading of ‘operational art,’ properly concerns itself with applying military means to attain political ends. As these ends will inevitably go beyond the mere destruction of enemy forces, it is appropriate that military planners properly address the matter of post-conflict planning. The military serves, in war, to ‘break things and kill people.’<sup>161</sup> It also has a vital role beyond the point when the breaking and killing ends. Samuel P. Huntington wrote that the management of violence sets the military profession apart from all others.<sup>162</sup> This view of operations has historically shaped military training, planning, and missions. Such is the American army culture.

The twenty-first century presents a different set of challenges to the soldier, and the situation is now more complex than when Huntington wrote *The Soldier and the State*. Post-conflict operations may not specifically require the ‘management of violence.’<sup>163</sup> They will require, the ability to rebuild civil infrastructure; jump-start local economies; provide law enforcement; and identify, encourage and develop local leaders capable of continuing the process of reconstruction. Only the military, and specifically the Army can provide such support to a state in the aftermath of a war. Without it, the same state may eventually fail.

The opportunity to implement a plan for the post-conflict phase of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM has been lost. Current attempts to rectify the situation may succeed, but at a huge, and arguably unnecessary, cost in lives and resources. The United States military can learn from

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<sup>159</sup> George Packer “War After the War: What Washington doesn’t see in Iraq,” *The New Yorker*, 24 November 2003 [journal on-line]; available from [http://www.newyorker.com/printable/?fact/031124fa\\_fact1](http://www.newyorker.com/printable/?fact/031124fa_fact1); Internet; accessed 16 March 2004. 58.

<sup>160</sup> William O. Staudenmaier, “Conflict Termination in the Nuclear Era,” in *Conflict Termination and Military Strategy: Coercion, Persuasion and War*, ed. Stephen J. Cimbala and Keith A. Dunn (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987). 30.

<sup>161</sup> Zinni, Anthony General (R) USMC, address to the USNI Forum, 4 September 2003. Internet, [www.mca-usniforum2003.org/forum03zinni.htm](http://www.mca-usniforum2003.org/forum03zinni.htm) last accessed 81 Sep 2003.

<sup>162</sup> Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, (New York: vintage Books, 1976) 11. Huntington uses the term first coined by Harold Lasswell.



its mistakes in Iraq, but it must first indicate a willingness to do so. That process begins with accepting that significant errors were made.

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<sup>163</sup> Nadia Schadlow, “War and the Art of Governance,” *Parameters*, Vol XXXIII, Autumn 2003, 92.

## Chapter 5

The challenges that the post-conflict phase of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM now presents were foreseeable. For several reasons, however, the strategic and operational leaders and their planners were unable to anticipate the most likely outcome of combat operations aimed solely at ousting Saddam. Foremost among the reasons for this myopia was groupthink at the highest levels, and a military cultural disposition preoccupied with decisive combat operations. The combination of bad politics, and inappropriate military culture, denied all levels of command the ability to collaborate with internal and external agencies and bodies in order to better anticipate likely scenarios after Saddam's fall. As a result, the United States Army since mid-May 2003 has conducted missions for which it was ill prepared. One consequence is the growing insurgency in Iraq, leaving American legitimacy hanging in the balance as reconstruction continues at a painfully slow rate. Another consequence is the significant and ever-rising number of military and civilian casualties.

Planners responsible for future operations must first recognize and accept the failures within post-conflict planning for IRAQI FREEDOM. They must then address these failures and seek to avoid future repetitions. Only the planners can reverse the trend of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries whereby the failure to achieve strategic objectives is caused by the inability to execute successful post-combat operations. Only the military can rectify the situation. Strategic guidance on policy objectives and peace-making conditions will never be complete, clear, rational or free of ambiguity. Politicians will always focus on achieving short-term success in order to demonstrate to the public, allies and enemies that they are making progress.

The United States Army espouses the writings of Clausewitz to its students of military theory. It should therefore adhere to the central Clausewitzian dictum that the military is an instrument of policy. As it currently stands, army culture, while in no way arguing for the

usurpation of civilian control of the military, seeks to reshape its political masters' views in order to make those views on war compatible with the military's preferred paradigm for war.<sup>164</sup> Such a methodology is ill-suited to the demands and nature of conflict in the twenty-first century. The military should look to the long term. Acceptance of this is the first step in building an effective campaign plans designed to achieve not just defeat of the enemy, but the governments' strategic objectives. Ultimate success requires detailed analysis of likely scenarios that may emerge after the war, and contingency planning to meet the missions and tasks that are identified.

The United States Army looks to doctrine to guide its actions. It is the common language to which all can refer and to which planners turn for direction. Doctrine should therefore reflect the importance of post-conflict operations. An honest appraisal of the planning conducted for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM would provide a wealth of lessons upon which to base revisions of Joint Publications 3.0 and 5.0. The lessons from Operation IRAQI FREEDOM should therefore be used to inform rewrites of these capstone documents to better reflect the critical importance of planning for post-conflict operations.

Similarly, capstone doctrinal publications should highlight the importance of preparing planners and operators for tasks associated with nation building. Exercises such as the Battle Command Training Program, and those run at the National Training Center, should assist in this task. The curriculum and exercises of the Command and General Staff Officers' Course and the School of Advanced Military Studies should provide students with a thorough introduction to the importance of planning and conduct of post-conflict operations. Lastly, future research should investigate the effects of the renewed drive to implement the 'warrior ethos' within the United States Army. Modern armies fielded by democratic states are comprised of soldiers, not warriors. Attempts to imbibe a 'warrior ethos' will undoubtedly entrench many of the negative and

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<sup>164</sup> Robert M. Cassidy, , "Prophets of Praetorians? The Utopian Paradox and the Powell Corollary," *Parameters*, Vol XXXIII, No. 3 Autumn 2003, 141.

inappropriate elements of current American military culture. The result will be to reinforce the failures seen in Iraq, and may lead to similar problems elsewhere in the future.

This paper has demonstrated that the need to collaborate is central to successful anticipation of the future challenges. Further study might identify how best to create a structure that allows for an iterative dialogue between relevant agencies, departments and expert bodies. Moreover, the evidence of groupthink at the highest levels may justify examination into how best to mitigate its negative effects.

The military professional must lead the way in conceptual thinking and contingency planning for post-conflict scenarios. He must explain to the political leader that the defeat of enemy forces alone will not bring about the desired endstate. Moreover, the planner must make the civilian leader understand that the most challenging operations will probably occur after traditional combat has ended. These more complex operations require proper preparedness and resourceing, and are likely to be the decisive phase of any campaign.

Operation IRAQI FREEDOM offers many lessons to those prepared to learn from it. This paper is concerned with how planners can better prepare for the challenges that arise in the post-conflict phase. As the counter-insurgency battle continues in Iraq, and the planning effort has switched to consequence management, it is likely that the focus on lessons learnt will be on the tactics, techniques and procedures needed to conduct the counterinsurgency. The mistakes made by commanders and planners during preparations for the war will be forgotten, only to be repeated elsewhere. If United States military planners are going to learn how better to plan for the war after the war, these lessons must be captured now.

Hopefully, the American experience in Iraq will demonstrate the truth behind the axiom, 'if you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there,' and that Iraq will become a free and peaceful democratic state. It is possible, however, that Operation IRAQI FREEDOM will not achieve the strategic objectives set out by President Bush. Perhaps the United States Army will produce a balanced report on why it was unprepared for the challenges of post-Saddam Iraq

and the insurgency. Since a good deal of the blame for these failures appears to lie with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, however, such a report may not be immediately forthcoming. In any event, commanders and planners involved in preparing for similar operations in the future would do well to conduct their own assessment of why planning for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM focused so heavily on combat operations. The military professional would then be well placed to decide how to mitigate against similar failures. He would also be at least one step closer to identifying a road map for success, and less likely than his predecessors to get lost along the way.

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